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[The Editor will be pleased to consider manuscripts if accompanied by stamped and addressed envelopes. He accepts no responsibility, however, for manuscripts submitted to him.]

Events of the Week.

WE exhort our readers to vote to-day against all Coalition candidates. The Coalition is a LIE. Its leader has sought to tie Liberals and Tories, Unionists and Home Rulers, conscriptionists and anti-conscriptionists, Protectionists and Free Traders, in a bond that binds them and leaves him free, obscures policy, and destroys all confidence in the faith and honor of public men. The Election, therefore, is a *plébiscite*—a vote for Mr. Lloyd George. But nobody trusts Mr. George. His Tory supporters read him one way, his tied Liberals another. The Labor Party, without which no Government can stand, distrusts him altogether. These contradictions destroy his Government before it is born.

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THE Coalition is not only a public danger; it is a scandal. The Election disfranchises the Army and insults it with the suggestion that the politician, not the soldier, won the war. It is intended to take all parties by surprise and give none of them time to organize and instruct their forces. It is therefore an act of violence and unreason, and its issue, having no ground in principle, must be worthless. It is also one of deliberate perfidy. The electors are called on to consider the character of the Peace, while the Press Bureau, in the name of the Prime Minister and the War Cabinet, instructs the newspapers not to discuss its terms or even to speculate on them. They will be settled before the meeting of Parliament. Should Parliament object, its voice will be drowned by a chorus of placemen and nominees. The war was the joint effort of the whole nation. It was also one of gigantic sacrifice. The election, on the contrary, is the self-regarding act of one man. Let the country see to it that it is also an unprofitable one.

* * *

IF Mr. George did not win the war, his conduct of the Election has almost lost the peace. No Minister has ever sunk so low. His policy has been one "ramp" after another. He has held himself up as the author of all our victories, and Mr. Asquith (who saved his career) as the contriver of all our defeats. He has not furnished the nation with one touch of fine feeling or one spur to good conduct. He has worded such statements of policy as he has made so as to mislead

both parties and commit him to neither. He has "starred" only two points, both leading to a peace not of reconciliation, but of exasperation and revenge—the trial of the Kaiser, who cannot be tried fairly, and the crushing of Germany by laying on her the full cost of the war, which he puts at twenty-four thousand millions. This he has coupled with the prudent reserve (much resented by the Stunt Press) that she must not pay more than she possesses, and that she must not pay it in the only way possible—i.e., by "dumping" her goods on her creditors. Not to be outdone, his colleague, Sir Eric Geddes, has suggested that Germany shall be squeezed like a lemon, and must be made to surrender to the Allies her gold, silver, jewels, libraries, and property, public and private. Thus the example of the private confiscation of property will be set to every Bolshevik in Europe; the Hun will be crushed under a Peace of Attila; and a Peace of Mr. Wilson, a Peace of the League, and a Peace of Reason and Honor, made impossible.

* * *

MR. GEORGE's statesmanship finally crystallized in five points, which we reproduce as a curiosity in the literature of British politics. They run as follows:—

1. Punish the Kaiser.
2. Make Germany pay.
3. Get the soldier home as quickly as possible.
4. Fair treatment to the returned soldiers and sailors.
5. Better housing and better social conditions.

Apparently the "Times," feeling that Mr. George was falling below the standard of Limehouse, thoughtfully picked him up again, and presented its readers with a comparatively literate and entirely meaningless version of his appeal. Thus:—

- Trial of the Kaiser.
- Punishment of those responsible for atrocities.
- Fullest indemnities from Germany.
- Britain for the British, socially and industrially.
- Rehabilitation of those broken in the war.
- A happier country for all.

This, we admit, is an ascent, but only from Eatanswill to Mr. Podsnap.

* * *

AT the last moment an issue of vital consequence has arisen, and if it could be argued in the breathlessness of this forced election, and if the two or three million Britons who are vitally concerned had been allowed to vote on it, it would determine the contest. That is Conscription. Mr. George promptly faced it both ways. He first issued from his Whips' Office an announcement declaring that the Government was going to the Conference to propose the abolition of compulsory service on the Continent. In other words, the freedom from forced service, which we, a Sea-Power, have always enjoyed, was in future to depend on the willingness of Land-Powers like France and Italy to abjure it. But this was not enough. The "Morning Post" jibbed with violence at the proposed abolition of conscription, and the Georgian "Chronicle" was ordered to say that the report lacked "corroboration." Mr. George then proceeded to trim the boat. The retention of conscription, he said at Bristol, depended "entirely on the terms of the peace," and it could not be

abolished unless the European system of conscription also came to an end. Furthermore, he declared that the Navy was a defensive weapon, not an offensive one, and that we did not mean to give it up. This SELLS THE BRITISH NATION INTO SLAVERY. For (a) the peace towards which Mr. George is making will be a bad peace, and (b) in face of it France and Italy will refuse to disarm, alleging our resolve to maintain our sea-power at its present standard. Europe, therefore, is ruined unless America intervenes to save her.

* * *

MR. LLOYD GEORGE has now advanced a new thesis. Because the war-position to-day is different from that when he took office, everything is due to him. *Post hoc ergo propter hoc.* It is an elementary fallacy, but it is good enough to prove that Mr. Lloyd George won the war. "Valor," he said at Leeds, "is in vain if there is disorganization, lack of direction, absence of vision, no energy behind the armies." This, of course, is perfectly true, and it is equally true that Mr. Lloyd George helped to win the war, as also did many a soldier now dead and forgotten. But Mr. George makes a show of proving his thesis. Germany, more powerful than ever in 1916, is beaten to-day, he says. Has he forgotten that five days after he became Prime Minister the Germans made the tacit admission of defeat on land by offering to conclude peace? Or are we to think that this was the panic that followed on the Georgian advent? Russia, he says, was tottering to her fall, but she did not in fact fall out of the war until fifteen months later. The truth is that both Russia and (less obviously) Germany were tottering to their fall; and if the latter was able to bring us to the most critical moment in the whole war this March, was this due to Mr. Asquith? Everyone knows to whom the crisis was due, and on Mr. George's line of argument, it was himself.

* * *

MR. GEORGE draws our attention to the submarine campaign and its achievements in 1916. We hear of how splendidly the Navy coped with that threat to the foundations of the Allied power. Again we are expected to infer that the Prime Minister did it. There is no objection to this sort of reasoning if Mr. George will also admit that the losses due to the submarine in 1917 were enormously greater than in 1916. If he saved us from the peril, did he also create it? The fact is that never were the Allies in so much danger of having their vital communications cut as during last year. A few graphic phrases are devoted to the "side-shows" which Mr. Asquith is supposed to have decried and his successor to have conducted to their brilliantly successful conclusion. Must we remind Mr. George that before he came into office General Maude had begun to close in upon Kut in that masterly series of operations which led to the capture of Baghdad? There had been disorganization; but the reorganization was due to Mr. Asquith's Government. Must we again remind our Alexander that before he took command the troops in Egypt were marching to the borders of Palestine? Was this also his work?

* * *

It is mere effrontery for Mr. George to speak as he does of the Somme and the Western Front. The Somme is written off as a glorious failure. It led directly to the retreat in March, 1917. But the heavy drain of the abortive attack on Passchendaele Ridge led to no strategic retreat, but to the German advance of March, 1918. Let us admit at once that there was no inevitability about this sequence if Mr. George had only withheld his "organization" and "direction," curbed his "vision" and damped his "energy." But the British Army had been so weakened that when Sir Douglas Haig was asked to take over forty miles more of the line and given only drafts (which forced him to take three battalions from his divisions), he knew that grave peril loomed ahead. Who was responsible? Mr. George's boast of the possession of 300,000 men in this country is answer enough. Indeed, if we were not a hopelessly illogical people we should now be asking Mr. Lloyd George to explain his handling of the Army. At the Conference of March 26th Lord Milner was apparently empowered

to agree to anything which promised to get the troops out of the critical position. He prudently agreed to the French demands; but that they seemed our one hope of victory is due to the "man who won the war."

* * *

THE amazing contention is advanced that Mr. Asquith would have depleted Salonika and so made it impossible to win the war on the Danube! We seem to remember that Palestine was reinforced by Mr. George by the transference of two divisions from Salonika. It was not Mr. Asquith, then, who weakened this sector, but his successor. "Austria fell when she found the back-door had been shattered by the Allied troops." Into this stupendous *suppressio veri* it is superfluous to pry too closely. Why was the back-door shattered, one may ask? The reason is simply that with every shiver of the chief enemy, Germany, her Allies shivered too. She had saved them for four years, and then it had become clear she could not even save herself. We must remember that Ludendorff asked for an immediate armistice, and it is now stated that he had been in a state of "moral collapse" for over a month. The desertion of Germany's Allies was the normal instinct to abandon the vanquished, and the collapse of Bulgaria had a much slighter influence upon Austria than Foch's first counter-stroke in July, or the American's superb sacrifice at Chateau Thierry. Those were the blows under which the "back door" fell. Monastir was recaptured before Mr. Lloyd George took office. But this victory led to no collapse. Why? Because Germany was still strong enough to hold her own.

* * *

ONE of the most telling points that have been made from Opposition platforms during the election is in criticism of the Government's Russian policy. The men who have been in India for the last four years saw at last with the ending of the war against Germany the prospect of a speedy home-coming, and their early return was eagerly awaited by their relatives and friends in this country. Already, it is said that, instead of being allowed to return home, at least one regiment of volunteers for the war against Germany is being sent to Siberia to fight against Russia. This statement has been made on electoral platforms. If it is untrue, it should be promptly contradicted. The result of these reports is that the men themselves, and, still more, their relatives at home, are full of resentment at what they regard as playing false with the volunteers of 1914. There is the strongest possible feeling in the country that the Russians ought to be allowed to manage their own affairs, and that British soldiers and the British people will not allow the impulse of justice which led them to offer themselves for a war against militarism to be diverted into a war in favor of reaction and Tsardom.

* * *

ON December 6th a serious collision took place in Berlin which may have a disastrous influence upon the further development of the revolution. A number of soldiers and sailors who had reached Berlin after the outbreak of the revolution and had therefore taken no part in the election of the Workmen's and Soldiers' Councils marched to the Chancellery and demanded that a National Assembly should be immediately summoned and the Executive Committee no longer allowed to interfere with the Government. Finally, the leader declared Ebert elected the first President of the German Republic. Ebert replied, asking them to wait for the all-German congress of Workmen's and Soldiers' Councils on December 16th, which would decide the earliest moment for the election of the National Assembly. He said that he could not accept the offer of the Presidency without consulting his colleagues in the Government, who alone could decide. The soldiers and sailors then marched away. A part of them, however, went off to the headquarters of the Executive Committee and arrested the officials. Meanwhile, in another part of Berlin, another group of soldiers who support Liebknecht were holding a meeting. The information was suddenly brought them that the Executive Committee had been arrested and Ebert proclaimed President. They

marched off to release the committee (which had already been released by Barth's persuasions) and to hang Ebert. The two bodies of troops came into one-sided conflict, as the result of which about thirty of the Liebknecht soldiers were killed by machine-gun fire.

* * *

It is clear that the struggle was not one between the Government and the Extremists, but between two bodies seeking to gain control of the Government. The Government is evidently prepared to continue to work with the Executive Committee, though only as a provisional arrangement pending the convocation of a genuinely National Assembly. It agrees that the election must be postponed for some while, but only until it is certain that all the demobilised soldiers will be able to vote. It is therefore opposed to the demand of the Executive Committee that the election should be postponed for six months or a year. The Government itself obviously desires to take a moderate, middle line.

* * *

But in this, it has no organized support. To the right are the soldiers represented by those who offered Ebert the Presidency, and who wish to precipitate the election to the National Assembly. In this they are, consciously or unconsciously, playing the hand of the reactionary bourgeoisie, for there seems no doubt that for another month at least it will be impossible for the soldiers to take part in an election arranged on a territorial basis. On the left are the Executive Committee, which apparently aims at retaining its present power indefinitely, and the Liebknecht extremists, who, though already disproportionately represented on the Executive Committee, aim at gaining complete control and establishing a dictatorship. The danger of the conflict is that the deaths will give fuel to the extremist agitation. Already Liebknecht is charging the Government with responsibility for them, and Ebert with having connived at the offer of the Presidency to himself. As a set-off against any increase in the extremist agitation, there will be the constant stream of freshly arrived soldiers, who will, no doubt, be strong supporters of the Ebert-Haase Government.

* * *

THE separatist movement in the Rhine Province has apparently begun to take shape. Previous to the arrival of the British Army of Occupation in Cologne, a crowded meeting was held, on December 5th, under the leadership of the ex-Centrum deputies Trimborn and Barth, at which it was decided to proclaim as soon as possible an independent Republic of the Rhine and Westphalia under the German Empire. The Catholic inspiration of the movement appears clearly from the persons of the promoters. Trimborn is a semi-democratic member of the Centre Party. Within any Republic of the kind contemplated the Centre could count upon a secure majority, and would therefore be guaranteed against any anti-Clerical legislation such as Adolf Hoffmann, the new Prussian Minister of Education, would like to impose. Since a considerable portion of the territory of the proposed Republic is in the occupation of the Entente, the clerical plotters will be fairly secure against the opposition of the Socialists. British troops have already been engaged in restoring order in Cologne at the invitation of the Burgomaster. This would seem to involve the deposition of the Soldiers' Council, which was previously in control. Nevertheless, urgent warning is necessary that Britain at least should not be involved in any attempt to support a separatist movement of this kind. No meeting in Cologne could possibly have authority to proclaim a Rhenish-Westphalian Republic within or without the German Empire. Though the Clericals are very strong in the Rhine provinces, and the Centre Party is at present in a majority, it is doubtful in the extreme whether in the event of an alliance between the Liberals and the Socialists, who are both probably against separation, their majority would remain. On the other hand, it is possible that the basis of the movement may be an alliance between the Clericals and the great industrials to escape Socialist legislation, the former in matters of religious, the latter in matters

of economic, privilege. In any case it is no concern of the Entente to interfere.

* * *

COUNT KAROLYI has left Budapest for Paris, with plenty of matter for reflection on the journey. The integrity of Hungary is in a bad way. According to the Hungarian report, the subject nationalities are claiming and occupying a great deal more than the territory which properly belongs to them. But since, according to the Magyar theory, no land of the Crown of St. Stephen can properly belong to any but Magyars, the injustice is probably less than the outcry. General Franchet d'Espérey has compelled the Hungarian troops to withdraw from the Slovak countries where they were opposing the Czech occupation, but it is not clear whether the Czechs have been allowed to occupy the whole of the twelve counties included in their extreme claim. If so, there is some justification for the Magyars' protest, although they can expect little sympathy in the retribution which has fallen upon them. No doubt the Rumanians and the Ruthenians have also staked out their claim. But it is still best to be suspicious of the Magyars, particularly when Karolyi is reported as putting forward the utterly impossible claim that with the exception of the South Slavs, no other nationality should be permitted to separate from Hungary, but should be guaranteed cultural autonomy within the kingdom.

* * *

THE question of the punishment of the Kaiser is soberly argued in an article in the "Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung," which is the first considered German opinion on the problem to reach this country. It fairly coincides with the best English opinion. It points out that a demand for the extradition of the Kaiser is impossible, because there is no offence for which he could be extradited. Moreover, the surrender of the Kaiser to the Entente by Holland will involve insuperable difficulties if the attempt is made to give any action against him a basis of legality. He would have to be tried for invented crimes, and special courts would have to be established for the judgment of these charges. This would be a violation of the universally accepted principle that actions are only punishable if the law against them was in existence before they were committed. The Entente would have to create a new law, a new procedure, and a new court of justice. The legal fiction must be put aside. The German paper assumes that the aim of the Entente is to put the Kaiser in a place where he can do no damage and be no danger to the world's peace, and advises it to invoke the sanction only of its actual power. Obviously the "Deutsche Allgemeine" has not the faintest objection to seeing Wilhelm treated as Napoleon was treated. Nor would anybody who retains his reason. But its assumption that our only aim is to put the Kaiser out of harm's way is incorrect. The people who cry for the Kaiser's trial merely want his execution.

* * *

IN a statement made on December 2nd, the Belgian Foreign Minister, M. Hymans, gave an interpretation of the recent speech from the Belgian throne, indicating the territorial demands which Belgium intends to put forward. In the main they are based on a rectification of the Treaty of 1839, by which, according to M. Hymans, Belgium was deprived of the principal portion of her provinces of Limburg and Luxemburg, and certain towns in the province of Liège, such as Malmédy, Montjoie, St. Vitus, and Eupen. Since the Act of 1839 itself constituted Belgium, it is a little difficult to follow the contention that it deprived Belgium of anything. The demand for the virtual incorporation of Luxemburg should be decided by the Luxemburgers themselves. Most probably they would be willing to join Belgium. The dynasty has become exceedingly unpopular during the war on account of its somewhat sycophantic attitude to the German invader. Further, M. Hymans declared that the King's statement that the 1839 treaty was now a dead letter meant that Belgium would demand that Holland should renounce its monopoly of the Scheldt.

Politics and Affairs.

THE POLICY OF THE PRESIDENT.

"Every four years there springs from the vote, created by the whole people, a President over that great nation. I think the world offers no finer spectacle than this; it offers no higher dignity; and there is no greater object of ambition on the political stage on which men are permitted to move. You may point, if you will, to hereditary rulers, to crowns coming down through successive generations of the same family, to thrones based on proscription or conquest, to sceptres wielded over veteran legions and subject realms—but to my mind there is nothing more worthy of reverence and obedience, and nothing more sacred, than the authority of the freely chosen magistrate of a great and free people; and if there be on earth and amongst men any right divine to govern, surely it rests with a ruler so chosen and so appointed."—(John Bright, at Rochdale, December 4th, 1861.)

"The world must be made safe for democracy. Its peace must be planted upon the tested foundations of political liberty. We have no selfish ends to serve. We desire no conquest, no dominion. We seek no indemnities for ourselves, no material compensation for the sacrifices we shall freely make. We are but one of the champions of the rights of mankind. We shall be satisfied when those rights have been made as secure as the faith and the freedom of nations can make them."—President Wilson's message declaring war on Germany.

"The idea of America is to serve humanity."—Address at the unveiling of Commodore Barry's statue.

PRESIDENT WILSON has arrived in Europe, and in a few days will be the guest of the King and of the British nation. It is a matter of the deepest consequence that the character of his mission should be understood. If that is perverted—still more, if its purpose is thwarted and made ineffectual—the consequences will be beyond all calculation. What are the circumstances? America is the greatest nation the world has ever known, and the greatest democracy. It has been so ordered that this people should be the final determinant of the war. The chief military effort, indeed, was not America's nor the main sustaining force. That glory is ours. Nevertheless the Power which was the arm behind the arm of the Allies in their last thrust must be held to have furnished the moral and the material guarantee of victory. If on the ground of this inestimable service, America holds that she has saved civilization, we will not grudge her claim. But the point is that it was a service of absolute disinterestedness. The people of the United States did, indeed, feel that the progress of the war had made their neutrality impossible and had broken up their traditional policy of isolation. In the President's words, Americans had become "citizens of the world." But their great spokesman never for one moment allowed them to forget that they were also its knights-errant. America did not come in merely to end this war. She came in to end all war, as war is understood in the European sense and on the European scale. Her alliance has never been with principalities and powers. Her oath of fidelity was to herself. If Europe adopts America's peace-conception, she is with Europe for its realization. On the other hand, if Europe, now in the hands of democracies or semi-democracies, "reverts" to armaments, annexations, conscription, balances of power, secret treaties, punitive indemnities, and strategic frontiers, America, in the person of her great President, will wash her hands of European concerns, and shake the dust of European soil from her feet for ever.

That is the issue. That is the case of President Wilson. Downing Street and the Quai d'Orsay may have other views—we hope they have not. America will not

be interested in them. Her President is not a Minister. He is a Sovereign. He has come to help, not to chaffer. His clients are not Courts or Ministries. They are the suffering, the menaced, peoples of the Old World. Some of us think they are not in particularly good hands. Certainly they know nothing, and in this country are forbidden to know anything, of the peace which is being fashioned for them. So far as they can see, the President is the only ruler who, from the beginning of the war, has consistently laid down any moral doctrine concerning it, or has sought to construct a settlement consistent with the good, not of one nation or one set of nations, but of all. This design is in full harmony with the spirit of the political evangelism of America. She is still intent on avoiding entangling alliances for herself. But a negative aim no longer satisfies her. She now hopes to "disentangle" Europe, to infect her peoples with her own enthusiasm for peace, justice, "self-determination," self-governing democracy. In this sense Mr. Wilson regards himself as a trustee, and this moral relationship, which gives him peculiar power, also carries with it a special responsibility. He is responsible to America for American ideas; he is responsible to Europe for their faithful presentation to its rulers.

What are those ideas? They are presented in the series of addresses and papers, collected under the heading, "President Wilson's Foreign policy."* Here is the message of the President. It is necessary to say one word as to the credentials of the messenger. "Before everything else," says Mr. Wilson, "I love America." The President might have gone further still. In her strength and her weakness, Mr. Wilson is modern America. As he brought her into the war a united nation, so will he take her to the Peace Conference, or take her out of it. Nor will foreign criticism and opposition qualify his representative character, or shake his hold on the soul of American statesmanship.

Shall we, therefore, have reason to quarrel with his intervention, authoritative as it surely is? No. In a material sense, the President is not come to "intervene" at all. He will not, as the "Round Table" suggests, institute an American protectorate of Turkey. He will not constitute a Court for the hanging of the Kaiser, or detain an American army for the indefinite occupation of Germany and Austria. He will not make America the bailiff for victorious Europe,† on Mr. Lloyd George's theory that war is a litigation in which the loser pays the winner's costs. If Europe wants these things, she must do them for herself. America's part, if we rightly interpret the President's speeches, will be ameliorative, but not punitory. She maintains the European exchanges; she holds a great part of the European debt. She will continue these good offices. But the only other arrangements she will sanction will be those which, in the President's view, "will tend to secure the future peace of the world and the future welfare and happiness of its peoples," under democratic forms of Government. She will consent to changes of territory, and only those, which give their populations a "fair chance of life and liberty," and are made with their consent. Seeking "no advantage or selfish object" for herself, she will admit none for her associates in arms. Having declared herself the "sincere friend of the German people," and having rid them of the autocracy, as no "fit partner in a League of Honor," she will set no further bar to the "early establishment" of relations of "mutual advantage." In other words, she is prepared to give democratic Germany her seat

*Oxford University Press (American Branch), 1918.

†"No indemnities must be insisted on except those that constitute payment for manifest wrong done."

at the League of Nations. She will not boycott or penalize German goods, or refuse to feed German furnaces or factories, or place the German Republic under tribute to the Entente. A period of service she will, we imagine, consent to; the President is no sentimentalist, and it is in the letter and the spirit of his bond that a war-aggressor should pay for war-damage. But she will be no party to the illicit re-distribution of power on a military basis or to the destruction of industrial Germany by indemnities. The secret treaties America has never endorsed. Her President refuses assent to any second series of private re-assurances. From the moment when peace negotiations open, all must be above-board.* She will require an Allied evacuation of Russian territory.† She will want to give a Constitution to the colored colonists. She will not consent to divide with us the future government of the world through a joint exercise of permanent sea-power, and she will have nothing to do with Conscription. And generally she will call for a peace which starts on a basis of internationalism. It will not be enough for Europe to say that some day she will try to think internationally. She will have to act internationally right away.

This we believe to be America's policy. It takes nothing out of Europe, not an inch of soil, nor a vestige or symbol of power; it will leave there only her dead soldiers, slain for liberty, her debts (which she will forgive) and her good-will. We call that a magnificent offering. Shall Britain reject it? Or France? If so, why? To drag their chains back into the Hell of war? Who will follow such leadership? Not the artizans of Europe, nor her farm-laborers, nor her merchants, nor the soldiers of her war, nor the mothers and fathers that are and are to be. One thing is certain. If President Wilson's counsel is rejected, nothing can avert a universal revolution. America would sit apart from that convulsion, having striven to avert it, and her world would become the only refuge left for men and women who put freedom before every other gift of life. But there is no need to despair of our own society. We need only accept her good offices and rebuild it.

CONSCRIPTION OR PEACE?

THE great lesson which the war has taught us is that the majority of mankind lack imagination. If they had had enough of it or had used what they possessed, the war could not have been begun. If under the pressure of the terrible event itself the rusted faculty had been burnished, the war could not have continued. The war was begun, was continued, and has ended. We now know that it is all over with civilization if it is to be safeguarded only by the imagination of mankind. The service that imagination should have done must be performed by actual experience. Instead of a national imagination Britain has to rely on the experience of a section of the nation. It is the soldiers who should supply the place of our imagination. *The soldiers are not to be consulted.*

Since even our vicarious imagination is thus to be shelved, the opportunity of making the vital issues of this crucial moment in human history real to mankind at large and the British public in particular are small. The vital issues are predominantly ideal issues. They can be apprehended only by the

imagination. The material attraction of "making the Hun pay" can be withstood only by an imaginative realization of the inevitable consequences of the attempt to place a great nation under the yoke of economic slavery. Even if the leaders of the people were working with single-hearted devotion to the task of enlightening the people and making such realization possible, they could not do it. There is no time. And Mr. George, so far from making any effort to enlighten the people, is straining every nerve to make enlightenment impossible. He has taken good care that there shall be no time.

Therefore it is the more urgent and necessary that so far as is yet possible the public attention should be concentrated upon the concrete and immediate consequences which are involved in the ideal issues. They may be smaller than the ideal issues; but they are nearer. They do not demand imagination to be apprehended. Yet if they are won, everything may be won. They are the material keys to the ideal castle. Of these the chief is the question of conscription. In and for itself it exists on the same plane as "making the Hun pay." The abolition of conscription is as desirable to the ordinary man as the receipt of imaginary German millions, and is as fervently desired by him. Mr. Lloyd George knows it. But he also knows that he cannot offer both desirables at the same time. Of course, if he were an honest man, he would welcome the incompatibility of the two material advantages as a God-given weapon of defence against those "stunt-hunters" whom for one moment he found the courage to denounce. He would say, with the fold of his toga gathered in his hand, like the Roman senator of old: "I bring you indemnities and conscription or no indemnities and no conscription. Which will you have?" That would be his action if Mr. George were honest. But Mr. George is something different. His toga is a cornucopia, overflowing with contradictory desirables. But still, even he has not the assurance to offer conscription and no conscription in the same hand. But he is an expert conjurer. So he waves his wand, utters some syllables which sound like no conscription, says very loud: "We will make the Hun pay to the utmost limit of his capacity," and waits for the universal applause.

The applause is hesitating and fitful. The demi-semi-official announcement that "the Government will go to the Peace Conference with the definite intention of proposing the abolition of compulsory military service throughout" is not quite the same thing as the master's *ipse dixit* that there will be no conscription. In the first place Mr. George did not say it, and has in reality, taken extreme care to say nothing. The demi-semi-official oracle pledges him to nothing. Even his own press organ has to admit that official confirmation is lacking to it. But even if he pronounced those words with his own lips, and amid a cloud of witnesses, still they would pledge him to nothing. The Government might, in fact, propose the abolition of compulsory military service throughout Europe at the Peace Conference. What if the other Powers, especially the two military Powers in the Alliance, France and Italy, should say "No"? What are the chances of their saying "Yes"?

We will not commit ourselves to saying that the chances of our Continental Allies consenting to the abolition of compulsory military service are small, because that might be taken to imply that they are less anti-militarist than we, and that they are less concerned with developing military into moral victory. There is no real evidence of this. The impartial observer would be bound to admit that the lack of concern with moral victory is apparently about the same in England and on the Continent, at least in so far as the Governments at

* "It will be our work and purpose that the processes of peace, when they are begun, shall be absolutely open and that they shall involve and permit henceforth no secret understandings of any kind."—Address on the Conditions of Peace.

† The President's sixth point.

present in power are concerned. Moreover, it is well known that for internal reasons France prefers a short-term compulsory service to voluntary enlistment. What one can say is that the chances of their consenting to any such proposal as that ascribed to the British Government by Mr. George's Press agency are perceptibly diminished by the manner in which the proposal is made public. What is the Allied politician on the Continent to make of the simultaneous publication of an unofficial pronouncement of this kind, and of the determination to retain her naval supremacy, voiced by Mr. Churchill, the First Lord of the Admiralty, and the Prime Minister? If Britain can claim naval hegemony, France can claim military hegemony. If the mastery of the seas is vital to England, the mastery of the Continent is vital to France. The Continental politician doubtless does Britain the honor of supposing us neither so disingenuous nor so stupid as to put forward the proposal for military disarmament, without the simultaneous offer of naval disarmament. The proposal is bound to appear either a vote-catching device with no substance in it, or a clumsy attempt to put the odium of the decision of a purely internal British question upon our Continental Allies.

If the British Government desires to abolish conscription, it has merely to declare that it will do so. Nothing stands in the way, except the expectation of a similar war in the future, or the desire to inflict an impossible punishment upon Germany in the present. If the former cause is operative, then it is confessed that not only has this not been a war to end wars, but it has been a war to make them. If the latter, the English workman will have the satisfaction of knowing that he will be insured by three years in barracks against the unemployment which will inevitably follow the exactation of a punitive indemnity in goods from Germany. But the idea of the retention of conscription in Britain is utterly fantastic to the sober mind. Yet why does Mr. George hesitate to declare that it will be abolished? Why does he deliberately avoid such a declaration? The answer which cannot fail to suggest itself is that he himself contemplates a peace that must be maintained by an army of two million Britishers in addition to a supreme British fleet. Or, in addition, a monster Franco-British expedition to Russia on behalf of Franco-British capital.

The abolition of conscription in Britain is not and must not be made directly dependent upon the success of a proposal for the universal abolition of compulsory military service. It is a question apart, about which no difficulty exists. The suggestion that conscription in Britain is on the same level as conscription in the continental countries is as preposterous as the implication that by abolishing conscription Britain has made her sacrifice towards the abolition of conscription throughout the world. That sacrifice is only to be made by the voluntary readjustment of our naval position in agreement with America. Two things are necessary to the achievement of a measure of real disarmament throughout the world. We must declare that we are prepared for such a readjustment of our naval position; and the peace-settlement in Europe must be such that it contains within itself the guarantee of its own duration. The first is the sacrifice which we must make in order to be in a position to propose any general disarmament to the Continental nations; the second is the necessary condition of their being able to accept the proposal. The connection between the abolition of conscription in Britain and its abolition on the Continent is therefore only indirect. The abolition of conscription in Britain would be to some extent an indication that

we did not intend to impose economic slavery upon Germany, and to that extent a moral guarantee of a peace settlement sufficiently just that it would be to the interest of no nation to disturb it.

Therefore the vital question, apart from which all the other issues take on an air of unreality, is the nature of the Peace. Peace cannot come through abolition of conscription alone. It must come through naval no less than military disarmament. No one can doubt that a most deliberate and persistent effort will be made to bring into existence a settlement which would be a parody of the word. If the schemes of the British and Continental might-politicians are realized, America will undoubtedly withdraw into her isolation. It will be impossible for Britain, implicated as she will be in the Peace, to follow the American example. We shall be involved in the task of maintaining a Peace that is no peace on the Continent of Europe. Conscription will not be abolished. On the other hand, America will go her own way in naval armaments, and we shall be engaged in a ruinous competition in which in the long run we are bound to lose. We cannot run with the American hounds and run with the Continental hare. **THE BASIS OF THE WORLD'S PEACE MUST BE AN ANGLO-AMERICAN UNDERSTANDING.** To make that possible we must learn, what we have already forgotten, that it is our real calling to be comparatively disinterested arbiters in Europe, whose aim is its peace.

THE PRICE OF OUR RAILWAYS.

In a manner thoroughly characteristic of the time we live in, the announcement of the Government's decision to nationalize our railways was jerked out from Mr. Churchill by a chance heckler at an election meeting. Nobody could have felt surprise at the decision. Long before the war it was evident that the highways of the nation could no longer be left to private enterprise, which had ceased to be genuinely competitive. Neither could it be governed in the public interest by the regulations of the Board of Trade. The necessary war-control of the last four years, by its enforced unification of working, its enormous increase in the wages-bill, and its guarantee of pre-war profits, made an early measure of nationalization certain. It is not possible to revert to pre-war conditions, even if it were advisable. Before the war there was a strong demand for nationalization on the part of labor, large sections of the business world, and a growing number of railway shareholders. Now the demand is virtually unanimous, except for a handful of *laissez-faire* purists, who regard every enlargement of State functions as bad business and worse politics, and who would apparently prefer a private to a public monopoly. The recent conversion of railway shareholders has been wholesale. They look to the public exchequer and the taxpayer to secure their property against the inroads made by labor with the consent and assistance of the Government, and have made up their minds that a handsome Government security will be better for them than the precarious ownership of railway shares.

Now, long convinced of the desirability of this large step in State Socialism, we have always urged the necessity of a close public scrutiny into the conditions under which the national acquisition of the railways should take place. The Government ought not to decide to buy the railways before Parliament has had ample opportunity to consider the terms of purchase. Not merely the question of the railways is involved. Other schemes of nationalization are inevitable in the early future. Under them large amounts of public money must be paid for the

purchase of private properties and interests—in land, mines, public-houses, and other valuable assets. Unless we embark upon this business with strong safeguards against a policy of plunder, we are lost. The strongly-organized private interests, commanding, as the railways do, powerful advocacy in both Houses of Parliament, will do their utmost to fasten upon the public ruinously high terms of purchase and of compensation. The first safeguard of the people is to insist that before any decision to purchase is announced, the various bases of valuation shall be examined, and the results placed before Parliament in such a form as to enable it to strike a fair bargain. When, some years ago, Switzerland decided to consider nationalizing its railways, *it first passed a Valuation Act*, and then proceeded to an Act empowering the Federal Government to acquire the properties.

We strongly urge reformers not to be rushed into a scheme prepared by and foisted upon them by the railway interests. The danger is obvious. For, however the elections go, it is certain that the coming House of Commons will contain a powerful and probably predominant body of big business men and their lawyers, frightened about the labor situation and "confiscatory" taxation, and eager to secure themselves and their property under the aegis of the State. They will use their short-lived control of the State to sell out upon profitable terms arranged by themselves and their friendly Government. The railways will be the first and test case. Their history is replete with waste, corruption, and extravagance. Of the original capital, a large proportion was consumed on enormous prices for land and the legal and other expenses of Parliamentary Acts. Again, of the 1,300 millions odd railway capital in 1913, at least 200 millions was "water," the chief object and result of which was to conceal from the public the real earnings of the paid-up capital. The handsome fees of hundreds of useless and ignorant directors helped to swell the expenses of a system which, in spite of all the criticism to which it was subjected, never made any serious attempt to put itself upon a sound modern basis either of material, technique, or accountancy. The handling of freight traffic up to the present day remains a monument of wastefulness. The sweating wages, long hours of labor, and other labor conditions before the war, were defended on the grounds that the low net earnings could not bear the cost of decent treatment of the workers.

When the strike of 1911 was settled by the intervention of the Government, and a publicly enforced rise of wages took place, the railway shareholders felt they had the game in their hands. They intended to make the public pay for the better conditions which they were obliged to concede. A good deal of the cost they were encouraged by the Government to put on freights and fares, on the naive theory propounded by Mr. George: "We are simply giving the railway companies a right which is now extended to every business man in the country. . . . If there is a great settlement between colliery owners and their employees, or great cotton spinners, or in any other industry which involves a heavy increase in the labor bill, they pass it on, and *they are entitled to pass it on.*" In other words, where decent conditions for labor are imposed upon employers, they are "entitled" to take it out of the consumer! Hence the Government promises to the railways to recoup themselves by raising rates.

But now they are to have another longer pull upon the public purse, by looting the taxpayer in the terms of purchase. It may seem that we assume gratuitously that the Government will make a bad bargain for the public. We do assume it, and what is more significant, the

investing classes assume it, as the rise in railway stocks, caused by Mr. Churchill's announcement, amply testifies. Unless we are mistaken there will be an attempt to get something like the terms of Mr. Gladstone's Act of 1844, giving the State power to acquire railways constructed after that date accepted as a basis of purchase. "The purchase price to be paid to such company shall be twenty-five times the average annual profit during the three years preceding the date of the giving of the aforesaid notice"—*i.e.*, three months' notice. Any such proposal would, of course, be a monstrous one in view of the actual business prospects of our railways. Even if no war had occurred, our railways were a wasting asset. Apart from the legitimate demands of labor, the expenses of electrification and of a completely new equipment of rolling stock, for which no financial preparation had been made, loomed in the near future, while the growing competition of rapid road traffic, to say nothing of the possibility of the air, threatened to cut heavily into their business.

There is, of course, another mode of valuation, fairer than this preposterous proposal of twenty-five years' purchase—namely, to buy out the companies upon some average of the market prices of their stocks and shares, taken during recent pre-war years. But even this method would not properly represent the real present value of the assets. It would include large elements of value due to the expectation of being able to strike a good bargain with the State. Nationalization before the war was an early probability and was certainly reflected in the market values of the years in question. In our opinion the proper valuation would be upon the basis of so many years' net earnings on the hypothesis that the railways were restored to the pre-war situation, with an allowance for the compulsory rise of labor costs imposed by the Government.

For it is evident that if the Government choose now simply to hand back the railways to the companies, leaving them to make their own bargains with labor, they could not pay their way. If strict justice were done to their past defects of finance, mismanagement, and sweating of labor, the shareholders would get little or nothing for their property. But because there is no disposition to press upon innocent shareholders so hard a measure of responsibility for a bad past, that is no reason for allowing big railway men in the House and country so to "fix it up" with the Government as to hand over heavy loot extorted from the taxpayer. That would be to establish a precedent which every other business interest would use for its own enrichment.

THE MEANING OF "COALITION."

MR. BARNES, the ex-Labor member of the War Cabinet, is so honest a man that there is often in his utterances a pleasant note of revelation. To such a revelation did he invite his constituents at Gorbals a week ago when he said that he was glad to see that the railways were to be nationalized. Surely this is quite the most extraordinary phrase that ever fell from the lips of a Cabinet Minister. Mr. Churchill had impulsively told a Dundee heckler that the Government had decided to nationalize the railways. Whether Mr. Churchill had any right to state this on the Government's authority or not may be an open question—that is not our point. The point is that Mr. Barnes, although a member of the War Cabinet, apparently got his first intimation of the Government's intention from Mr. Churchill's speech, and was not in the least surprised that such an announcement should be made without consulting him.

This is an eloquent revelation of the real position which a Labor representative holds when he enters into a reactionary Coalition. He plays no part in the effective determination of policy. He is only glad or sorry according as the Government's decisions are such as he likes or dislikes. The real seat of power is far removed from him and from the full session of the War Cabinet. His presence is just a convenience in administration: the

vital decisions are taken in consultation with the reactionary interests upon which his colleagues and their Coalition ultimately depend. In fact, a Coalition of opposite opinions can only work at all, or avoid total stagnation, if the opposing elements in it are virtually excluded from control. Under present conditions, and with a Coalition such as that which is led by Mr. George, the element excluded from power is inevitably—Labor.

Mr. Barnes has unwittingly paid the finest possible tribute to Labor's good sense in leaving the Coalition and deciding to act with complete independence. Labor in Coalition does not mean Labor with an effective voice in the forming of policy. It means Labor chained up and muzzled. Only Labor in political independence, with full power of criticism and opposition, can exercise an effective influence on Reconstruction.

How important it is that Labor should exert a political influence commensurate with its economic power we are only now beginning to realize. In relation to economic problems, Parliament is, under present conditions, the expression of economic forces, and the constitutional outlet for many economic claims and aspirations. It is of vital importance that it should be a true expression of them. This it can only be if Labor is strongly and independently represented in it. A misrepresentative Parliament will not be able to ignore the forces which are unrepresented or under-represented in it, and will be forced by strikes and industrial upheavals into the making of bargains with bodies outside Parliament.

That is what has been happening more and more in recent years both before and during the war. The small Labor Party in the House of Commons has been a ridiculous under-representation of Labor's strength in the country. The result has been that, when it has been desired to press a measure directly affecting the working class, it has been necessary to ignore the balance of forces in Parliament, and to strike a bargain with the forces outside. This has been true, not only of Labor, but also to a great extent of Capital. It will continue to be true in proportion as Parliament continues to be unrepresentative of the economic forces outside.

Of course, it may be said that Parliament ought not to represent interests or forces, but the collective will of the nation. In theory, this is true; and we may hope that some day it will be no less true in practice. But it is not, and cannot be true to-day. More and more, in the nation to-day, power is coming to rest in the hands of great and conflicting interests, and he who holds that Parliament can ignore these interests has no right to complain if, in doing so, Parliament loses its sovereignty.

The Coalition, stripped of its political trappings, is, in fact, a Coalition of interests. It represents the union of Tory landlordism with Big Business—with the highly concentrated and syndicated form of capitalist enterprise which the war has so hugely developed. It is not a "Tory" Coalition, in the sense in which Toryism is merely a political creed. Its bond of union is economic and practical.

On certain terms, this Coalition of interests was prepared to make a bid for the inclusion of Labor. It was prepared to offer to Labor, in return for the laying down of "restrictions," certain measures of social reform on the Bismarckian model—reforms which would not hurt, and might help, the vested interests which it represents. But it was not prepared to offer Labor any real or effective control over policy, because it realized that, if Labor shared really in control, the agreement of interests on which its Coalition was based would inevitably break down. It was quite prepared to have a Labor man in the War Cabinet; but it would choose its man, and it would take its vital decisions on questions of policy behind his back. In fact, the Coalition attitude to Labor is at best one of paternalism; it will do certain things for the workers, but it does not mean to let the workers do things for themselves.

In face of this attitude of the Coalition, what is the temper of Labor itself? Labor's demand is essentially a demand for control, and can be nothing else. The time has gone by for offering *panem et circenses*: Labor has at last awokened itself to a sense

of its own power, and is groping for the handle of the political machine. Fortunate, indeed, it is for the nation that this is so; for the coming of Labor to full political self-expression offers the best chance of progress along constitutional lines.

Industrially, the predominant characteristic of the trade union movement to-day lies in its struggle to secure industrial control. The Whitley reports were a clear recognition of this demand, as well as an attempt to divert it into safe channels. The Labor demands go beyond the Whitley reports. The railwaymen are demanding an equal share in the management of all railways, and similar claims are coming thick and fast from the workers in other industries. These demands are not necessarily, or in the great majority of cases, revolutionary. They can be met by concessions, such as the Whitley Reports suggest, if the concessions are *panem et circenses*.

In politics, the position is essentially the same. Labor's demand is not so much a demand for reforms as a demand for power. Reforms are wanted, of course; but Labor also wants, and means to take, a share in securing, enforcing, and controlling reforms. Labor has set its feet on the path of political independence.

By adopting this attitude, the Labor Party has successfully torn the mask from the Coalition Government. Not even a majority of the electors may have had the time to see and know its real face before recording their votes; but a realization of the truth is now only a matter of time, and not even of a long time. In putting forward the demand for control in politics and in industry, Labor is issuing a challenge to the vested interests which form Mr. George's real backing. The demand of the big combines which have profited so hugely by the war is also a demand for control—complete and exclusive control of the nation's economic destinies. It is not prepared to relinquish the control which it has gained, and it cannot share it, because it is essentially anti-social.

For the big interests behind the Coalition exclude from power not only the vast mass of the working producers, but also nearly the whole middle-class and most of the middle-sized and smaller employers. They exclude, in fact, the public as consumers as well as the mass of the public as producers. The nation is faced with the most gigantic conspiracy of vested interests that the modern world has seen. The only organized force capable of giving political expression to this public opposition to those interests is the force of Labor. Given a strong Labor Party in Parliament, we can be assured that this necessary opposition will assume constitutional forms: denied that outlet, it may break into disorder. In any case, it will be the expression of the resentment not only of the manual workers, but also of a great mass of the articulate public, at the domination of the machinery of State by a few and in the interests of a few.

A London Diary.

LONDON, FRIDAY.

THE election has ended as it began, in an orgy of sops and sophistry. The spiritual feast is about as nourishing as the material. Mr. George has no policy and can have none. He has let passion ramp, and fed it; and in the act has almost destroyed the hopes of a good peace. His mind is untuned to fineness or to complication; a lively Celtic cascade dropped into Niagara. Need he cannot satisfy. But he can give everybody a little cheque on the future, and pay in bribes and hints the debts he knows he can never discharge. The Army is disfranchised and gets a day off, the women the key of the street and five shillings to spend; other peoples' armies are to be disbanded, and Britannia's broom to ride at the masthead. The Liberals will not let him say "Con-

scription," or the Tories "No Conscription." So he says both and neither. I suppose he will win through. None the less, he is lost. His majority, won by a ruinous trick, is a mere Mime's sword, sure to smash to splinters on Labor's anvil. The men who compose it, and drove the bargain out of which it sprang, expect him to stand between them and the revolution. That was the psychology of the deal at 12, Downing Street. But only a great representative man, able to convince Labor of his integrity, disinterestedness, and grasp of the social problem, could hope to bring a vast, half-formed, but immensely powerful political force into an arrangement.

AND he won the war! One man's word drove tens of millions of boys hither and thither (about one in five to their death), and a mass of them to victory. An attractive and ingeniously adherent FLY sat on the mighty Wheel and guided its whirl. How comforting! I never heard the theory entertained on any lips save Mr. George's. "Nobody won the war," said an experienced observer of it to me, "but two men did a good deal in the last lap of the race—Foch and Clemenceau." Foch ended the duality of military control as between Haig and Pétain, and M. Clemenceau was the dominant political figure. For the rest Mr. George did bad things and good things, and usually irrelevant things. Probably the best of all was his S.O.S. to America. That was a characteristic stroke, achieved with a flick of his remarkable energy. But how could a good military decision come from such a mind as Mr. George's, "slim," intuitive, but ill-furnished and careless of detail? The event showed that his coquetry with minor adventures was wrong; and that his neglect of the Western Front might have lost the war if the British soldier had allowed him to lose it. But that is exactly what could not happen. Any conscript boy has a right to tap his breast and say "I won the war!" with the consciousness that at least he is nearer the truth than Mr. Lloyd George.

As for the five points, a well-known public man sends to me the most appropriate comment on them:—

"Surely the worst injustice that this precipitate election has brought forth is the Prime Minister's advertisement of us as a nation of Yahoos."

"Compare the two points that Mr. George (in his five-point manifesto) makes cardinal in our Peace programme with any of Mr. Wilson's fourteen, and more especially with the latter's supplementary commentaries."

"Evidently, after the first notice of the 'five points' had gone out to the Press, someone protested (perhaps Lord Northcliffe), for the 'Times' produced a purged edition of 'six.' (Any capable editor could see the originals would not 'do,' so possibly there was merely an unauthorized exercise of professional gumption.)

"But if second thoughts are best, first are, unfortunately, more obviously characteristic."

"It is a filthy affront to the nation, no matter how much it may have been only meant to catch groundling votes."

THE enthusiasm has been for Labor and for those free Liberal candidates with a personality and a programme. The Labor meetings are described to me as wonderful for fire and mass—audiences of 3,000, 4,000, or 5,000 have been quite common. And the main intellectual drift is Labor-wards. Take the really formative writers—Wells, Shaw, Bennett, Zangwill, Masefield, Carpenter, Olive Schreiner, Hewlett, Havelock Ellis, Jerome, Bertrand Russell, Graham Wallas, the Webbs, Hobhouse, Hobson, Cole, the mass of the younger poets, artists, and

essayists, and last but not least, the soldiers. There is the same drive in the ranks of the Civil Service. There the intellectuals are divided between the eclectic Imperialism of the "Round Table" and the Foreign Office, and the ideal vision of Internationalism. The movement to democracy is the most dramatic I have known since Fabianism and is much more radical. In five years its political equivalent will be in full power. Hardly less significant is the Nonconformist movement of sympathy, if not of complete identification. The feature of Wednesday night's demonstration was the loathing it showed of Conscription. The cheers rose again and again in response to Dr. Clifford's declaration of uncompromising war. Thus opens the great battle of the immediate future. But the underlying note was the anxiety to get in touch with the idealism of the Labor movement. There lies the political future of Nonconformity. It has no other.

BUT the event that counts most is not the election. It is the journey of the President. The mere curiosity about him—his personality, his appearance, his thoughts, his policy—is enormous. It has been greatly stimulated by the way in which his own countrymen speak about him. I have heard many of these home judgments. I never heard one that did not close on a note of admiration, reluctant or unreserved. To us he is more of an abstraction. Yet his name is on every tongue. Mr. Wilson has been the intellectual sensation of the war, as Mr. George is its popular diversion. He attracts by the clear note of his manifestoes, the decision of his attitude, the distinctness of his mind, the dominance of his will. Here, clearly, is a king of men, the only shaping force in politics that the war has disclosed. But for those whose hope is in democracy the "George Washington" carries almost their whole treasure. If the President fails, or his peace is bartered or frittered away, the belief in a good issue will fade from hundreds of thousands of hearts. I do not think he will fail. He will take no hand in the auction of his principles that a certain kind of diplomacy will be eager to open with him. "He is made of good hard Presbyterian stuff, with a dash of Irish humor," said a friend of his the other day. That is a good foundation to build on.

THERE are deeper notes in our affairs than the senseless racket of the election. One of them will be the cry of the famishing men and women of Europe. Their case is now in strong hands. All that can be done Mr. Hoover will do. But it is time to plead their cause. The German case is not the most serious. If the blockade is somewhat relieved, Germany will not starve, though the plight of some of the greater urban centres is sufficiently serious. Graver and more urgent is the plight of Belgium. Her railway system is almost at a standstill, owing to the colossal theft of her stock of locomotives and trucks, and the Allies are fully justified in insisting on their replacement. A greater obstacle still is the freezing of the canals or their destruction by the retreating German armies, as well as the desolation by the same hands of a tract of country in France, from Verdun to the sea, through which no railway transport can in consequence pass. The problem of supply, both for the civilians and for the armies, is therefore a terribly difficult one. But it is manageable compared with that of Russia. There famine is, I fear, inevitable, and on an appalling scale of unmitigable suffering. Men's hearts are full of hatred for revolutionary Russia. They will soon, I hope, be wrung with pity for her, and their minds busy with thoughts and plans of rescue.

BUT though the German situation is less grave than that of the outer ring of Europe, it is, I imagine, quite serious enough to call for measures of help and precaution. Mr. Hoover has already suggested their necessity. How have his words been rendered in our newspapers? I place side by side the report of his speech before leaving the United States, and the abridged and essentially falsified account of it which appeared in our Press:

WHAT MR. HOOVER SAID.
From "The Christian Science Monitor," Boston, U.S.A. (November 18th).

New York.—Herbert C. Hoover announced just before sailing on November 18th that "we are not calling upon the American people to make any sacrifice with a view to feeding the Germans. We are not worrying about the Germans. They can take care of themselves, if given a chance. But the watertight blockade had got to be abandoned. If there is an advance relaxation of the blockade, Germany can get food—fish from Norway and Sweden, grain from Argentina—but the blockade will have to be lifted. What is desired most now is for Germany to get on some sort of a stable basis, so that she can pay the money she owes to France and Belgium. Unless anarchy can be put down and stability of government can be obtained in these enemy States, there will be nobody to make peace with and nobody to pay the bill to France and Belgium for the fearful destruction that has been done. Justice requires that Government be established to make amends for wrong done. And it cannot be accomplished through the spread of anarchy. Famine is the mother of anarchy."

In this fashion a serious, though a limited, warning as to the character of the food situation in Germany is turned into a statement that there is nothing in it to worry about!

THE journalist and the censor between them have missed the most brilliant and the most historic moment of the recovery of Belgium. This was King Albert's entry into the Belgian Parliament, sitting in solemn session. The King and Queen did not wait to enter their palace. They rode straight from the procession to the Parliament. The usher announced their arrival—"La Reine! " "Le Roi!" When the King came in he went at once to the place assigned to the three heroes of the German occupation—Cardinal Mercier, General Léman, and M. Max, and warmly greeted them. Then he made his speech. The passage announcing the institution of the Flemish University passed with slight notice. But a storm of cheering followed the announcement that no amnesty would be granted to those Belgians who had assisted the German occupation. The great emotional scene was the later blessing of the crowd by Cardinal Mercier.

MR. HAMILTON FYFE sends me the following poetic address to President Wilson:

Now God be thanked that in the dreadful hour
Of the world's madness, He raised up a man
To speak in wisdom's tone and wield the power
That only noble mind and honour can.
Daring alone to shape the generous thought,
Facing with stern rebuke the frenzied few
Who, still insatiate with the havock wrought,
"Hate on, hate ever" cry, a maniac crew.

From those whose striving is for place or self,
Who set their course to catch the changeful tide
Of popular favour, he stands apart,
No profit seeks, nor fears to be himself,
For he has made Eternal Truth his guide
And the live coal of Mercy warms his heart.

A WAYFARER.

Life and Letters.

TRUTH AND HAPPINESS.

IT is a specious and a shallow saying of the conservative thinker that to make the many wise is but to multiply misery. To fill a man doomed to navvy's toil or the dullest routine with Platonic dreams and liberal aspirations is to mock his chains. Why bring beauty to the caged clerk and leave him to mourn her violation? Did not those very Greek philosophers, of whom our sentimental democrats are apt to discourse so fondly and so ineptly, segregate the herd of artisans from the fair and fine? They knew well the truth which Pope rhymed later for our guidance, that short draughts from the Pierian spring are the most fatal intoxicants, that culture to be culture at all must be complete, and that the learned illiterate is the most hapless of beings.

Thus the argument runs and those who, in Lord Morley's striking phrase, hold "a vested interest in darkness," are only too eager to use this screen against the insurgent rays. Many and various are the answers made to the charge, and yet another is forthcoming in a little book of recent publication. Mr. Harold Begbie in his "Living Waters" (Headley Bros.) has jotted down a series of interviews with workers of many types, a clerk, a doorkeeper, a collier, a Leeds Bolshevik, a Birmingham Ruskinian, all of whom describe for him the invasion of thought and learning into their souls. It is a plea for the energies of the Workers' Educational Association, a journalist's plea if you will; but the interest of the book lies in the revelations of the talkers rather than in the comments of the listener. And so far from supporting the conservative assertion that book-learning brings only misery to those in poverty, the general verdict justifies adult education on grounds that would satisfy the strictest Utilitarian. For those men, at any rate, communion with the wisdom of the ages and the beauty of the world has not made their work-a-day lives intolerable. Rather has it so widened their gaze and increased their responsiveness that only by this communion can life be endured. Their ignorance was never bliss: their wisdom has never been folly. The Pierian spring has quenched a raging thirst and brought happiness without frenzy, joy without reaction.

The word education suggests always to the British mind something hard and unlovable. Mention the word and we visualize a dreary room, bare forms, meaningless maps, and text-books of jejune erudition, mere compendia of trivialities. That dread adjective "educative," clumsy and cacophonous, brings with it shuddering memories and dark imaginings: we think of stories with a high moral tone, topographical cinema films, lectures on the ant, and football for character's sake. Of all nations we are most apt to call whatever we are doing our duty and to frown on any admission that we are enjoying it. It is typical of our ingrained Puritanism that we are always stressing the ethical side of education, never the hedonistic. Small wonder that education is unpopular, for there is nothing the public schoolboy hears more of and more heartily detests than the eternal chatter about character. If he is always being told that the object of his cricket is not the thrill of a well-timed drive nor the ecstasy of bowling an unplayable over, but the splendor of combination and "playing the game," if Virgil is presented to him not as poetry but as a mental gymnasium, wherein the difficulty and drudgery will bring out his perseverance, he will soon be equally exasperated with compulsory athletics and compulsory *Aeneid*. The Utilitarians made a tremendous assault on the permanent British assumption that happiness is something to be ashamed of, and in the end they failed. The assumption stands, and nowhere more firmly than in the class-room. We must seek truth to be good: we must seek truth to be rich and to be respectable; but we must never seek it to be happy.

Yet against the conservative argument that education, save for the elect, is a short cut to misery and against the ascetic argument that happiness being

a snare should never be the goal of education, the results achieved by the W.E.A. are a permanent refutation. Once and for all it has been proved that the quest and capture of Truth has been a source of real and abiding pleasure, not only to the academic few strutting it in some riverside hencoop of the Muses, but also to the nameless many, colliers and clerks, weavers and wives, snatching half-hours in seemingly impossible conditions in order to fling their net upon the flying joy. The case for the playing-fields of Eton does not rest upon the hope that the future administrators of the Empire will never do what is "not cricket." Nor does the case for extending adult education rest upon such grim phrases as "betterment," "purer social order," "amelioration of existing conditions." True, these things matter; but the cases rest fundamentally upon a simpler and a nobler word, Happiness.

It may seem strange to the academic mind that the pursuit of knowledge and of truth as something good in itself should need any justification. Yet such a defence is gravely needed. Education is in danger to-day because it is being so much belauded. Its praises are sung in Philistia and re-echoed in the cities of men. We must seek truth and ensue it, but not as an end. We must study history in order to be better imperialists, we must study science to increase production, we must study languages to control new markets and engineering to "speed up" anything that is not already rattling itself to death. Education is becoming popular. We are at last setting out to capture truth, and we may end by merely capturing trade.

Technical education is necessary, and no balanced critic would disparage it. Ethical education is necessary and no sane citizen would see it vanish. But most necessary now, because most neglected, is truth for truth's sake. Let us not in our commercial ambition and moral zeal forget the joy of knowledge. And what a creative joy it is! A knowledge of history may seem dull enough, yet it can turn a few odd hours in some old English town from a boredom to a pilgrimage of pleasure. Give but a slender pile of facts and a mere spark of imagination, and what a flaming beacon may not be kindled by things so common as an old earth-fort, a Roman road, a Norman castle, some pots and pans, a harbor of the old adventurers, a town of the medieval woolmen forgotten in the western wolds! It needs but a little history to set the plainest things teeming with suggestion and to render them fruitful in ideas. Science we may need to be civilized, but also to be happy. A country walk may be good enough with its gift of air and health, but it becomes an infinitely richer thing when the secret of the birds and the flowers, the reasons for their coming and going, the chart of their seasons and the conditions of their flourishing are known to the passer-by. Then not only are the senses medicined with the sleepy charms of the air, but every glade becomes an adventure, the movement of every beast a challenge to further understanding. Who has dipped into the lore of the earth finds gold in every quarry: who has read the ways of the birds finds joy unspeakable when by his own espionage he can disprove the wisdom of the books and yet add another pebble to the pyramid of truth. Pedantry kills: the classifying specialist with his hoard of specimens and musty Latinity is the very miser of mental treasure, mistaking in true miser's fashion the sorry means for the noble end. But ignorance is not a whit better. Creative knowledge, fact kindling fancy—here lies the form and body of culture and this true education brings.

Never was there a time when men were more busily scheming and dreaming for the future: never, therefore, a time when men should have a clearer knowledge of the end they desire and be less easy prey to catch-word and confusion. Big words are on every lip and big ideals in every mind. Only let them be clear. We talk of happiness and welfare: let us have them clearly defined. If happiness be the emotional companion of free functioning in response to the call of normal instinct and desire, if it be the by-product of unrepressed energy and balanced self-determination, then the happiness we aim at must include the free activities of the mind.

Knowledge and thought must be recognized as being as essential to life as food and movement: they must be treasured as ends, not as means. Thus education will be released from its ancillary position. No longer will the teacher be one who only opens the road to riches and position, or even to the negative virtue of "good form": he will no longer create only paths to the good life; but the good life itself. He will show to all and sundry that, be their handicraft what it may, there is a pleasure of knowledge and a happiness in understanding. He will recognize that while education is concerned with making efficient workers and competent citizens, its highest function is the creation of good and happy men. And happiness can exist only in individuals. Call the State what you will, organism or mechanism, person or fiction, god-head or devil: it remains a collection of individuals, and all the philosophy of the world will not make it otherwise. The end being happiness, and happiness being free activity, the individuals of the truly great community will seek truth and love it as naturally as they seek food and sleep and life itself. Truth, in Milton's simile, is ever born a bastard into this world, hated and despised. There are many still to revile her, many to crush her: but among the legions of the oppressed there are some, it seems, who, outcast themselves, have made friends of this outcast and found her company enchanting. They sought her for no gain, nay, even lost by the search. But they were faithful, and perhaps they will soon have many followers; and small wonder when men learn that she, who once seemed most drab and most severe of maidens, is in reality most radiant and kindly.

THE FUTURE OF FLYING.

The majority of dreamers who have visualised the changed conditions in the world under the discovery of aerial navigation have pictured the swift and sure flight of airships with shimmering silver bodies, plying upon recognised airways, cut up at natural stopping places by elevated platforms at which the craft could be moored. Before the war this picture might have seemed the more likely to be realized. The airship gripped the imagination with its apparent security, whereas the aeroplane, brilliant and a little bizarre in achievement, has never seemed to be much more than a toy; a glorious toy perhaps, but with all the toy's evanescence. How far the war has changed these views it is still too early to say. Airships and aeroplanes have both travelled time after time from their housing-places to distant but distinct objectives with a success that still seems a little wonderful and with a casualty list, if we except the specific war losses, probably not appreciably higher than in the early days of motoring. It used to be the fashion then to take extremely limited views of the possibilities of development of the new transport, and it is possible that we may err in the same way now. For, despite their achievements during the war, only the most sanguine would say that we had passed the early infancy of the flying machine, whether it be heavier or lighter than air.

Our knowledge is like a sort of network, with almost as many gaps as filaments. The conditions have tended to this, and it is strange that even now we have not yet eliminated one great source of danger, that of structural collapse. Under the pressing necessity of multiplying aeroplanes at the greatest possible speed, the tendency to produce aeroplanes which satisfy certain conditions of velocity, climbing power, and lift, without special reference to safety, has been inevitable. The first three conditions were essential, the last only desirable. Risks had to be taken in any case; and not only has this operated in the manufacture of machines, but also in the behaviour of pilots. We have, therefore, a strangely mixed *corpus scientiae*. Very strange liberties can be taken with aeroplanes without real risk; we have been made breathless by the manœuvres which military pilots have carried out in order to test their machines or out of their mere exuberance of life.

On the other hand, even experienced airmen have met their death in the simplest evolutions. It is the same with airships. More have suffered from mere mis-

chance than have fallen to that elaborate barrage with which vulnerable centres protected themselves. Some time before the war a Zeppelin came down in Germany when there were no risks that should not have been expected. There is, then, a large area of risk in flying, and every need of careful and painstaking research upon almost every element which goes to make up the complex problem of flying. A considerable amount of work has already been done upon the medium of flight in the air; but the results at present do not seem to justify the dreams of the over sanguine. We know that aeroplanes can fly in almost all weathers. Indeed, it is not too much to discard the reservation, and maintain that, with experienced pilots of good nerve, there can hardly be imagined any weather in which internal communications by air need be disturbed. It is probable that the risk is relatively no greater than that which would have kept a vessel in port half a century ago, but has now no effect upon sailings. An airship is more at the mercy of the winds, and this would suggest that the lighter-than-air vessel is less serviceable for all weathers than the aeroplane. But for comfort and security in ordinary weather, it is probable that the dreamers will have their way, and find the aircraft of their fancy in the lighter-than-air vessel. The airship has other qualities in its favor. Its reasonably good journey can be reckoned in four figures as against the aeroplane's three; but on one or two occasions the latter have made continuous voyages which are almost if not quite equal to those of airships.

There does not seem to be any reason that is more than temporary for regarding the aeroplane as the inferior of the airship, and there is no obvious justification for the view that transport through the air will be only supplementary. It will probably operate within certain limits, just as the motor-car and the train. The one does not merely supplement the service of the other. It fulfils a different rôle. Air transport will probably be the same. For relatively small loads, the aeroplane may rapidly displace the ordinary modes of transport. Mails and news services almost certainly will be by air within the next quarter of a century, and the vast improvement this will make must have its influence upon international relations. Passenger services will probably be no rarer than the Pullman cars or the long distance expresses; but, again, the improvement will displace the present methods of travel, and tend to bring nations together. Private ownership will probably be no rarer than that of motor-cars ten or fifteen years ago. It will be of immense advantage for business men or diplomatists to visit their clients or principals within the day. And all this is not only a possible, but a probable—almost a certain—development of the next quarter of a century.

The element of risk will gradually be ruled out. At present our knowledge of the air as a medium of flight is only fragmentary. We know that at a very low height the disturbance of the earth ceases, and that at a comparatively great height the thermal conditions change and the wind conditions are steadier. There is less room for surprise there; but the cold is intense and the winds may be double the strength of surface winds. How far it is practicable to travel in the *stratosphere*, as this region is called, no one at present can say. The lift of an aeroplane is proportionate to the density of the air, and at such a height the air is very much rarer than near the ground.

But this means no more than that the machine must be able to develop a higher speed, and this would be desirable from the velocity of the winds. The cold need be no difficulty either for the pilot (and passengers) or for the petrol, and it is possible that the *stratosphere* may offer a suitable plane for long distance traffic. For there are certain to be air lanes, and there must be a code of laws to regulate traffic. But a journey to Calcutta, the Cape, or New York in a fourth of the time at present occupied will be compensation enough for the risks and changes necessary. For it is obvious that aerial transport, when it comes, as come it must, will create a new world. Aeroplanes will be multiplied a thousandfold, and airships at least a hundredfold. Services may be financed by the State, and we can imagine the unthinkable chances and horrors of war under such conditions. Three or four divisions of troops could probably be landed

in the heart of a country from any other country in Europe in the night at any chosen moment. It will be impossible to prevent the dispositions, either for offence or defence, being known, and the unsuspecting, under such conditions, would fall an easy prey. There will, of course, be prohibited areas; but nothing can prevent the accidental crossing of such areas, and it will be impossible to prove that any such episode is not an accident.

The coming of aerial transport sounds the death of warfare by reducing it to an absurdity. It must also assist the fostering of good relations between countries. Little by little it will clear away the seeds of dissension by fostering intercourse between peoples. It will probably have a considerable effect upon the internal life of every country by increasing the distances at which people may live from their work. The filthy and poisonous locomotives are bound to disappear, and their place will not be taken by electric traction, though this may be used for heavier loads over longer distances. By degrees, passenger traffic, within limits, will become a monopoly of the air services. But in order that this may come to pass as quickly as possible, research must be encouraged; and, unless we are to be confronted with a greater muddle than that of the railways, it would be prudent for the State to take control.

Communications.

WHAT THE SOLDIER THINKS.

To the Editor of THE NATION.

SIR,—The bottom has dropped out of the War. All the meaning and incentive of military action and warlike preparation have disappeared, but military routine and military despotism still hold sway in the services; and out of the firing line it is frequently difficult to realise that the terrible period of state-organised suffering is really ended. This is perhaps inevitable, for the mechanism of the great war machine, which it took two years to get properly working, cannot be stopped in a day. Nevertheless, that great part of our Army which consists of freedom-loving citizens, finds the petty round of military routine which goes on unabated, irksome beyond expression. For the most part of this discipline, which in the majority of its aspects hitherto seemed so essential and now so senseless, is imposed by professional soldiers—for the higher command is still composed almost entirely of "regular" officers. This explains much. For the professional soldier, unlike the civilian, does not long to beat his sword into a ploughshare when the battle is won. Instead, he starts to sharpen it again. The net result of this divergence of outlook is that the powers that have their being in Whitehall and the Strand insist on the importance of matters which, with the downfall of Germany, have lost all their significance.

It is all very natural, perhaps. The British regular officer may rejoice as much as any of us at the overthrow of Prussia—as a professional victory; but he does not rejoice in it as a triumph over militarism, and if he said he did he would be either a renegade or a hypocrite, and he is neither. He is simply a member of a certain class whose trade is war; and we can no more expect him to desire the end of that by which he lives than we could expect an undertaker to sing the praises of a scientist who discovered the elixir of life. In what direction, then, does the professional soldier's mind turn in this hour? It instinctively seeks to grasp more firmly the vast newly-garnered prestige which it feels to be slipping from its grip. And this, *au fond*, is why Private Smith is still to-day arrested and crimed for walking in the street with the top button of his greatcoat undone.

Each pull at the rein makes the citizen-soldier feel his vague sense of resentment more acutely. To comprehend more fully his state of mind, however, it is necessary to view it in relation to the present mental condition of the nation as a whole.

For the moment, Great Britain is, so to speak, at a loose end. The campaign ended with a startling suddenness that took our breath away. The War, which dominated our existence for four years and seemed of a rock-like consistency, crumbled to pieces beneath our feet, and in a week vanished into thin air. Nothing has yet taken its place to absorb the energies of the populace. The Peace Congress which looms ahead holds out, it is true, an impelling interest of universal appeal; but it has not yet become sufficiently controversial to engage the wandering attention of the nation; and Mr. Lloyd George's Government has carefully refrained from allowing the public to realize that it is a matter in which public opinion should play an essential part. The General Election, of vital importance though it is, has unfortunately seemed to the public but a matter of the immediate moment, so brief is the tenure of its actual business. The vast question of reconstruction in all its aspects—this is the only subject which combines the elements

of state action with individual interest to a degree sufficient to occupy the public mind. But somehow, reconstruction has not been made to appear a thing of the immediate present, but something rather vague which is to descend upon us like a mantle at some time in the future, after the map of Europe has been redrawn.

Nevertheless, reconstruction is what every citizen in khaki or mufti is dimly aware to be the subject of most personal interest to him—with demobilization as a first step to lead off with.

Demobilization is regarded with apprehension by civilian and soldier alike. The lives of millions of civilians have been disorganized by the War to almost as great an extent as the lives of those who joined the colors. An enormous mass of workers employed in munition factories, shipyards, and agriculture are out of their normal trades and away from their usual domiciles. The transference of these into their ordinary occupations presents a problem which will necessitate extremely careful handling if serious hardship is to be avoided. The natural instinct and desire of the war-workers is, with the removal of war-incentive and the drop in munition wages, to return to their normal vocations as soon as possible; and this they are endeavouring to do. But at the same time they anticipate with misgivings the demobilization of the Army, involving, as it does, the freeing of millions of men who, they think, will be regarded as having a prior claim to whatever employment is available. The industrial worker dreads the onrush of returned soldiers; the thought of them disturbs his sleep at nights. Whether or not he has already managed to get back into his normal vocation, he has no feeling of security or permanence.

Reasoning on these lines, the returning soldier should not have much cause to worry about his future. As a matter of fact, he is worrying desperately. For he does not look at the matter from this point of view at all. He sees himself as an individual, helpless and hide-bound on every side by military authority, against which there is no appeal. He sees himself as having to hew his way back to civilian life through a mass of red-tape, officialdom, and army forms. He cannot say to his commanding officer: "I have done my job, the War is over, and my wife and children want me. I must go—good-bye!" in the same way that, three or four years ago, he said to his employer: "There is a War on. My country needs me, I must go—good-bye!" No, he must wait patiently, and for all he knows, indefinitely, until endless army forms have been filled in and multifarious documents collected from a dozen offices, or until his trade group is called for demobilization. Even if he is a miner he must wait. In one camp in the North of England some thousands of coal miners are awaiting discharge; their documents were taken by their battalion into the trenches and lost. These miners are likely to go on waiting for some considerable time—for no apparent reason—although the mines are crying out for them.

The citizen in khaki feels the delay he is likely to undergo to be disastrous to his private interests. He visualizes the lucky, unhampered civilian scrambling in at the beginning and snatching all the best jobs. He does not feel quite the man he was—the hardships have told on him and he needs rest and quiet—and, above all, he is not quite happy at the idea of returning to the fierce battle of commercialism. He wants to get back, for he longs to leave the army and regain his personal freedom, and yet he feels that many elements of the old life under the grasping capitalist will be distasteful to him. He fears ingratitude, and that his sufferings will be soon forgotten. And his ideas are higher. But his chief worry is the vagueness of his future. At present he has no certain knowledge that he will be demobilized at all. For although it is almost universally assumed that disarmament is inevitable, yet one cannot recollect any practical utterance on this momentous question from Mr. Lloyd George. The Government has yet to promise the abolition of conscription.

A little wise statesmanship would go a long way to assuage all this unrest, which is very real in spite of its being inarticulate. A Prime Minister who understood his people could and would reassure both the civilian war worker and the citizen soldier. He would show how work and good wages can be found for all. He would pledge himself to find suitable employment and a decent standard of life for every man who had joined the colors, and promise instant release for every man who desired it—for even that would not deplete our army dangerously.

Above all—and here we are back at the starting point—he would not allow grown men who have fought and bled and sacrificed for their country to be treated like children in small matters affecting their immediate freedom and comfort, and subjected to an anachronistic discipline as narrow in its conception as stupid in its application.—Yours, &c.,

W. R.

Letters to the Editor.

PARTY GOVERNMENT AND DEMOCRACY.

SIR,—Under "Events of the Week" in your current issue, I notice you say, "In other words Mr. Lloyd George will do without the Party System," and as I believe this is not an uncommon opinion, I should be glad if you would allow me to criticise the remark, as it seems to me he is not only

retaining but aggravating all the worst and most characteristic features of that system.

During the infancy of the Party System, when the powers of the Crown were being gradually transferred to Parliament, the mistake was made of allowing these powers (the right to appoint and dismiss Ministers, to dissolve Parliament and so on) to be taken over by the Prime Minister instead of by the House. The introduction of the Caucus in the early sixties, was another fatal error, from the democratic point of view. Its developments include not only telling the people and then the Members of the House how they are to vote, but even the shaping of the policies of the Parties.

Under these combined influences the Party System, with its machine-made politics, has robbed the House of Commons of its rights and powers (from the initiation of legislation to the control of foreign politics and even of the expenditure of money) until it has become an object of derision and contempt. Party government has not only shown its complete incompatibility with Democracy—it has marched through Bureaucracy to Autocracy—an evolution prophesied by a very acute observer more than a generation ago. All that Mr. Lloyd George and his Super-Caucus have done is, aided by the war, to have hastened this natural development. Quite possibly he has hastened it rather too much and may find he has also hastened the popular re-action against the secret Cabinet System and Party Government in its entirety, which was bound to come before long.

The true antithesis of Party Government is Parliamentary Government. Before British rule can fairly be called Democracy, it must have

(1.) A House of Commons elected by proportionate representation, so as to be as nearly representative of the nation as possible.

(2.) An Executive, individually elected by the House at its first meeting after a general election, and irremovable during the life of that Parliament, excepting in the case of a vote of censure on some individual Minister, a contingency very unlikely to occur. The Government would thus be as closely representative of the House as possible.

(3.) Parliamentary Standing Committees—one for each of the great departments—chosen from the different Parties roughly in proportion to their strength in the House. These Committees would report to the House, when they saw fit, as to the work of their departments, and would convey to them, through the Ministers in charge, any decisions on policy or instructions from the House.

The Prime Minister, who would be the Chairman of the Executive—chosen by themselves—would of course have no power to dissolve the House, which would carry on for its statutory time, say five years. Freed from all Government threats and from the immoral necessity of having to consider at every decision, "How will my vote best effect my main purpose, of turning the Government out or keeping it in?" Members will then be able to attend to their business with calm minds and honest votes. The Executive, then in their rightful position of Ministers instead of Masters of the House, will be free to devote all their energies to administration instead of leaving it to the "permanent heads," Bureaucracy, the "game of ins and outs," artificial Parties and their "machines"—Super-Caucus and all—would then die a natural death, and we should come in sight of the ideal that born-democrat, Charles James Fox, had in his mind when he said, "*The main object of good government should be to obtain independent voters.*"—Yours, &c.,

E. MELLAND.

Alport, Bakewell. December 2nd, 1918.

HANGING THE KAISER.

SIR,—The writer of the Article on "Hanging the Kaiser," states that war has never been regarded as a crime. But can crime not be committed within a state of war? Does war simply excuse everything—the sack of Louvain, the sinking of the "Lusitania," and the barbarities of the prison camps? Surely it is a question for inquiry how far the Kaiser and members of the Great General Staff or other officials are responsible for such crimes as these. Before dismissing the cry for the trial of the Kaiser merely as a demand for a victim, one would like to hear the writer of the article on this point of view. Certain it is that among the ordinary citizens a distinction—if not a very clear one—is drawn between war and such acts as those above referred to.—Yours, &c.,

S.

December 10th, 1918.

[The character of the war, especially as the Germans waged it, will undoubtedly require close examination. But in practice, the Kaiser will be tried by men who think war in general right, and only the Kaiser's war absolutely wrong, and who will come into Court determined to find him guilty on a charge of moral responsibility, which cannot be defined by any existing legal code generally recognised as applicable to the prisoner's case. Thus, a Court which is no Court, will have to make law where no law is.—ED., THE NATION.]

SIR,—At the present moment the depressing penny press, and the almost equally depressing Sunday press, are busy shrieking for the Kaiser's blood. The policy of pitching upon

Imperial scapegoats may be popular with certain sections of the democracy; but is it justice? The Kaiser is (apparently) to be selected as the victim, not so much because he is "guilty"—for his guilt is at present assumed; it has not been proved—as because he is the Emperor. The truth is that the whole German nation is guilty, not a section of that nation, nor any particular set of individual statesmen or soldiers. The reason why the Kaiser is in exile is not because his people condemn him for supposed crimes, but because he has been unsuccessful. Had the war been won by Germany, he would have been smothered with congratulations and fawned on by the mob.

In the interests of fairplay, let us suspend any premature judgments on the personal guilt of the Kaiser. Many official documents have yet to be unearthed, before we shall be in a position to award our censure with any degree of certainty.—Yours, &c.,

E. H. B.

December 1st, 1918.

ALSACE-LORRAINE.

SIR,—On page 273 of your issue of December 7th, you say: "Alsace-Lorraine has a large German population, on any computation larger than the French population." As one who has given considerable time to the study of this question of Alsace-Lorraine, and, moreover, as a constant reader of your journal, may I suggest that, having said so much, you owe it to your readers to explain the basis of computation you employ upon which you find it possible to affirm that the German population is larger than the French? Personally, I am curious to know, further, exactly what interpretation your readers are intended to put upon the words "German" and "French" in the sentence quoted above. Would you also say what value, in your judgment, is to be placed upon the evidence as to the real feelings of the people of the provinces, furnished by independent witnesses such as Mr. H. Warner Allen? I refer to such statements as the following:—

"The events of the last few days in Alsace-Lorraine have a political importance that can hardly be exaggerated. Before the war, and even during the war, there was a certain school of thinkers who professed to doubt whether Alsace-Lorraine had any real desire to become French. The answer to these doubters has been given in unmistakable terms. . . . Lorraine and Alsace alike are holding festival because something has happened in their lives that is of tremendous importance. Even the most confirmed cynic, if he has a spark of sincerity left in him, can scarcely maintain a critical attitude after the rejoicings in Alsace-Lorraine. The outbreak of joy is spontaneous and unaffected."—Yours, &c.,

HENRY J. COWELL.

49, Nelson Road, Stroud Green, N. 8.

[The terms "German" and "French" were obviously used as equivalent to "German-speaking" and "French-speaking." On any computation the German-speaking population of Alsace-Lorraine is considerably greater than the French-speaking population. We have not the least doubt that the rejoicing over the re-occupation of Alsace-Lorraine by the French armies is sincere and almost universal. The hostility to Prussian-Germany which has grown steadily during forty years of infamous administration, was immeasurably strengthened by the treatment meted out to the provinces by the Prussian military authorities during the war. Every fair-minded German observer, who has written since the revolution removed the censorship, has admitted that if a *plébiscite* were taken, the vote in favor of France would be overwhelming. For this reason it seems to us that the refusal to permit a *plébiscite* to be taken would be a gratuitous assertion of prestige-polity, calculated in after years to encourage any anti-French agitation in the provinces.—ED., THE NATION.]

CARLYLE AND THE EXECUTION OF CHARLES I.

SIR,—May one in whose veins runs the blood of Thomas Carlyle venture the opinion that "Wayfarer" in attempting in his *obiter dicta* in THE NATION last week to draw a parallel between the fate of Charles I. and the proposed trial of the Kaiser did considerably less than justice to Carlyle and somewhat more than justice to Lord Morley? Plenty of ignorant, careless, and malicious scribes have distorted and misinterpreted Carlyle's teachings without "Wayfarer's" dexterous and trenchant pen being turned to such a use. I flatter myself that if my time, and your space and courtesy (of the latter I have no doubt), permitted, I could address to you a somewhat pungent criticism of "Wayfarer's" musings. But I will confine myself to two points. First, "Wayfarer" says that "Carlyle thought that Charles's death (in the middle of the seventeenth century) ended the worship of Royalty altogether." Then he goes on to quote via Morley, Carlyle's own words, written in the middle of the nineteenth century, on the subject, as follows:—"This action of the English regicides did in effect strike a damp-like death through the heart of funkeyism universally in the world, whereof funkeyism, cant, clothes-worship, or whatever ugly name it have, has gone about miserably sick ever since, and is now in these generations rapidly dying." I submit that what had happened in Europe and elsewhere in the interval between Charles's death and the time in which Carlyle wrote and what has happened since he wrote, prove that Carlyle was essentially right. Secondly, "Wayfarer" quotes Lord Morley's verdict:—"In fact, the very contrary of Carlyle's proposition as to death and damp might now fairly be upheld. For this at

least is certain, that the execution of Charles I. kindled and nursed for many generations a lasting flame of cant, funkeyism, or whatever else be the right name of spurious and unmanly sentimentalism, more lively than is associated with any other business in our whole national history." This, I respectfully submit, is just as fundamentally wrong as Carlyle's view was essentially right. The sedulous attempts made, from the Restoration onwards, to re-establish and perpetuate king-worship have, it is true, evoked responsive echoes in the hearts of not a few of the lackey tribe, but there is, I think, abundant evidence to show that, with ever-increasing conviction, the great mass of intelligent mankind have regarded the whole business with the good-natured tolerance and easy-going contempt due to a thing essentially hollow and unimportant—a matter that, things being as they were, was of little or no consequence, and on the whole was a not unpleasing bit of embroidery on the graver texture of life.

Far more widespread and pernicious, I have heard it suggested, are some of the numerous forms of cant and humbug associated with political Radicalism, Democracy, Progress, Reform, Orthodox Agnosticism, and other high matters with which the author of the essay on "Compromise" has been associated in a highly distinguished manner in journalism, politics and literature.

I will not venture to say anything concerning the very "lively" forms of cant that have been and are associated with the highest matter of all.

Perhaps I may venture to say that, more than once, in reading criticisms and "interpretations" of Carlyle by Lord Morley and others less eminent, I have been reminded irresistibly of the wide gulf fixed between the worthy pedestrian Hofrat Heuschrecke and the transcendent, eternal Diogenes Teufelsdröckh.—Yours, &c.,

JAMES CARLYLE HOGGAN.

London, S.W. December 11th, 1918.

DOES INTERNATIONAL LAW EXIST?

SIR,—We read that the Kaiser and others must be tried by International Law.

I venture to submit that there is a prior question, viz.: Does International Law exist?

There exist a body of law-making Treaties (as The Hague Conventions 1899 and 1907) and Customs (as the immunity of coasting fishing boats, if acting peacefully), but all these are subject to the instinct of self-preservation, which upsets them all.

So "The Morning Post" (March 20th, 1918) wrote: "International Law is nothing of higher sanction than the rules which a belligerent lays down, and is able to enforce, for his own conduct of a war."

So Hall, in his great work "International Law," wrote: "In the last resort, almost the whole of the duties of a State are subordinated to the right of self-preservation."

Major Stewart L. Murray (retired 1904) wrote a book in 1905 called "The Future Peace of the Anglo-Saxons." It was much commended by the Conservative Press. He said:—

"The first duty of a nation and a Government is self-preservation." "International Law is no protection except against the strong: and the only laws which the Great Powers recognise, are those of power and expediency." "All Treaties find their way to the European waste-paper basket."

Thus Russia, in 1870, broke the Treaty of Paris, 1856; Austria in 1908 seized Bosnia and Herzegovina, and broke the Treaty of Berlin, 1878; France seems to have broken the Act of Algeciras (1906) in regard to Morocco; and Britain, in her blockade, has practically broken the Declaration of Paris, 1856, under the excuse of reprisal for self-preservation.

Grotius (1625) allowed wars of self-defence to be "just." He believed the Old Testament to be binding on Christians, and largely quoted it.

Since then self-defence has been the excuse for all kinds of barbarities and the breaking of the treaties and customs of International "Law." To take a few examples:—

1. In self-defence the English seized the Danish Fleet in 1807; to prevent Napoleon seizing it.

2. In 1827 the Great Powers started a new convenient way of bullying small States. It was called "pacific blockade," and was used against Greece, Venezuela, and other little peoples.

3. The British "right" to visit and search convoyed merchantmen of neutrals in war-time is not recognised by the Continental Powers. It is a right of self-preservation only.

4. The seizure by a belligerent of neutral ships or rolling-stock, payment being made, is an interference allowed for self-preservation, so the Germans sank some British ships in the Seine in 1870, and in 1918 the British seized some Dutch ships.

5. The Germans claim that for self-preservation they had to go through Belgium, though it was a "wrong." The Allies practically violated Greece and Persia, and now Russia, for the same "reason."

6. Japan, in 1904, invaded Korea and Manchuria in self-defence against Russia.

7. The law of the air is now being discussed. The Institute of International Law, in 1906, said: "The air is free. States have over it rights only necessary for self-preservation."

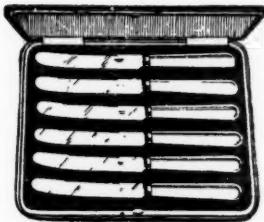
8. For self-preservation the Germans said they must sink our merchantmen, for we were trying to starve 70,000,000 people by our Navy: so they would starve us. This protest was made

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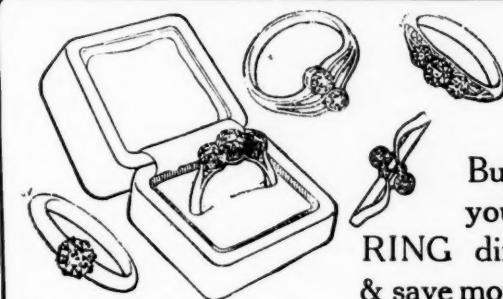
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on February 4th—6th, 1915, before the U-boat blockade began (see "The Times" for those dates, and Bethmann-Hollweg's Notes).

9. The English "Reprisals" Order in Council of March 11th, 1915, said Britain would intercept neutral vessels. Since then the Tenth Cruiser Squadron has intercepted 15,000 ships carrying supplies to Germany. ("Evening Standard," December 5th, 1918). This action practically destroyed the Declaration of Paris, 1856, and the distinction between absolute and conditional contraband, and kept foodstuffs from the *civilians* of Germany. Is it any wonder that our prisoners were badly fed? A returned prisoner tells me the German soldiers had but little food.

10. Nurse Cavell was shot because she helped Belgians to get back to their army, and so to kill Germans. A brutal act of the Germans, but, of course, in "self-defence." The French seem to have shot women spies.

11. The "Lusitania" was torpedoed because it had ammunition, it was said. Has this been denied? It was a dastardly outrage—but for "self-preservation."

12. Lord (then Sir Edward) Grey said five times on August 3rd, 1914, that we were entering the war "in defence of British interests," and not only for Belgium.

13. The Hague Convention, VI., 3, allows enemy merchantmen, taken in ignorance of the outbreak of hostilities, to go free. The Germans refused to allow this; and so the British refused in the cases of the "Perkeo," "Belgia," "Leda," "Erymanthos" (see "Prize Cases Reports," Vols. 1 to 10), in self-defence. Since then, the rule of self-preservation overrules all other rules, there is really no International Law, but only a set of changing rules which any strong State may and does ignore, at its pleasure, if it can plead "self-defence."

Until peoples see that self-preservation is *not* the final law of man, and that man must, and can, overcome evil with good (even if he suffers in so doing), there can be no lasting League of Nations, and no end to war.—Yours, &c.,

G. T. SADLER, LL.B.

"ANY SOLDIER TO HIS SON."

SIR,—I have shown the poem "Any Soldier to his Son," which appeared in your issue of 23rd ult., to many of my friends here.

Like myself they read it and marvelled at the exactitude and vividness of each line. The picture is true, and, because of that, so distinct from the unreal and sickly "popular" war poems to which we have so long been subjected.

Through you we wish to thank the writer for his portrayal of active service as the "other ranks" have known it during the long and painful years; his lines will assist us not to forget, and, at any cost, to do what we can in the future to prevent any similar horror.

"May the lies they've written choke them," is indeed the very heartfelt hope of—Yours, &c.,

FOOTSLOGGER, B.E.F.

France. December 7th, 1918.

Poetry.

ARIEL.

I.

Ariel of every tale
Is the child in dreams.
Ariel he is to those
Who in vain seek repose.
Ariel he is, it seems,
When death comes to him.
For he speaks clearly then—
"Master, wast' well done?"
And he laughs and runs
As if a thousand suns
Shone upon a bee!
Oh, what songs he sings
Out of old, old things!
"Picture of Nobody" he,
Master of things to be.

II.

Does he bring in his hand
Flowers from the land
That we roamed in our youth?
Is it in truth
His voice that we hear?
Doth nought appear
But him and his games?
"Where the bee sucks"—
Where doth he suck, think ye?
In the flower or on the breast

Of some fair saint?
Doth he take his rest
And ease without a taint
Of any coming ill?
Doth he take his fill
Of life without regret?
Doth he roam from home
And round again to home,
When everywhere is home?
Doth he roam
In every sunbeam, flower
Of price, or bird so common,
That his coming ever
May not him disserve
From the homely hour
When father, mother, sister, brother
Gather round the table,
And, as each is able,
Speak to one another
Of the things that matter?
And Ariel comes with chatter
Of the bells and flowers,
Of cowslip bells
And magic spells
Of happy, happy hours
Among the honey-dew—
Of things that few
Can miss and fewer hold.

III.

Our Ariel is bold,
And grips the heart of man
Even as lovers can
Grip one another
When the heart is free.
He stays himself upon
The special leave of man.
He comes when he is called.
Naught that appalled
His spirit on the earth
Hath any strength,
For his re-birth
Has brought him grace,
And he can fairly face
All that he feared.
Nothing that man can do,
Naught that appeared
Unheard-of, cruel, gross,
Can daunt his mind.
And in his power we find
New power, and every loss
Brings us new gain;
And every feeble pain
Wealth of an unknown kind.

IV.

Thus children serve
Both here and when we call
Through the dim room.
No light of day is then,
But every son of God
Is joyous as of old.
When we but swerve
From truth and God's own path,
Such power He hath
To bring us back. The gold
Of sunset is the track
Of such as Ariel, winged
With the wings of doom—
Judgment not hard:
Judgment of love,
Judgment that brings to men
Duty's prompt spring.
And all and more than all
They can desire of good
Comes as the children sing,
Holding the Holy Rood
Clear in the light of heaven,
Clear when the call is given.

M.

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[December 14, 1918.]

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THE following is our weekly selection of books which we commend to the notice of our readers:—

- "Last Poems." By Edward Thomas. (Selwyn & Blount. 4s. 6d. net.)
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* * *

PHILOSOPHERS are generally agreed that the principal motives for living are the display in action of the qualities of thrift, endurance, self-sacrifice, trust, gratitude, and duty. To demur at so elevated a doctrine would be, of course, to deprecate the moral currency, since only beasts and birds live according to the vulgar laws of Nature, and are alone without the sense of obligation. Yet it is possible, without subversive cynicism, to introduce a gloss upon this simple precept. Are these virtues, that is to say, ends in themselves, or are they rungs of the Jacob's ladder? For self-sacrifice, &c., for self-sacrifice, &c.'s sake would be profitless, and nothing, as everybody knows, is done in this world unless for profit. The question, therefore, resolves itself into—What is the shining object which is at once free of these virtues and the occasion of them? Curiously enough, the answer was, almost magically, vouchsafed me the other day, when, picking up a newspaper, I was confronted by an assembly of Notable Personages, solidly drawn up upon a railway station and clad (as though in reproof to them who seek a sign) in black. The answer was Greatness, and to its understanding and contemplation our humbler lives are surely dedicated.

* * *

NOT only is Greatness extremely conspicuous to-day (which is a blow to the anti-evolutionists), but this is a page about books. I had, therefore, to seek an authority among them which would either define the constituents of Greatness or represent a particular example of it in dramatic motion. Happily, I soon put my hand upon both theory and practice within the covers of a book, "The History of the Life of the late Mr. Jonathan Wild the Great," written by a man called Henry Fielding. Now just as, by the process of elimination, we separate the Great Men from the rest of mankind, so our author helps us to a conception of Greatness, by pointing out what it is not. A set of silly fellows, he says:—

"Have endeavored, as much as possible, to confound the ideas of greatness and goodness; whereas no two things can possibly be more distinct from each other, for greatness consists in bringing all manner of mischief on mankind, and goodness in removing it from them. It seems therefore very unlikely that the same person should possess them both."

Yet historians have confounded these incompatibles:—

"When the mighty Cesar, with wonderful greatness of mind, had destroyed the liberties of his country, and with all the means of fraud and force had placed himself at the head of his equals, had corrupted and enslaved the greatest people whom the sun ever saw, we are reminded, as an evidence of his generosity, of his largesses to his followers and tools, by whose means he had accomplished his purpose, and by whose assistance he was to establish it."

* * *

YET, though the possession of goodness would impair the uniform character of a great man, we must bear in mind not only the advantages to him of protesting and invoking this quality, but a genuine disinterestedness and lofty devotedness in the pursuit of greatness. As the great Jonathan himself remarks:—

"Why, then, should any man wish to be a *prig* (*prig*=a thief—Author's note), or where is his greatness? I answer, in his mind: 'tis the inward glory, the secret con-

sciousness of doing great and wonderful actions, which can alone support the truly GREAT man, whether he be a CONQUEROR, a TYRANT, a STATESMAN, or a PRIG. These must bear him up against the private curse and the public imprecation, and while he is hated and detested by all mankind, must make him inwardly satisfied with himself. . . . What less inducement could persuade the *prig* to forsake the methods of acquiring a safe, an honest, and a plentiful livelihood and at the hazard of what is mistakenly called dishonour, to break openly and bravely through the laws of his country, for uncertain, unsteady, and unsafe gain?"

Iago violated the moral law, not because he had any quarrel with Othello or Desdemona, but "to plume up the will." Confronted, then, with such evidences both of material power and mental superiority, it is surprising that certain of the lower sort of people should display ingratitude towards their great men—

"Who, while 'hey have been consulting the good of the public, by raising their own greatness, in which the whole body was so deeply concerned, have been sometimes sacrificed by those very people for whose glory the said great men were so industriously at work; and this from a foolish zeal for a certain ridiculous imaginary thing called liberty, to which great men are observed to have a great animosity."

* * *

IT is natural that as our civilization grows more splendid, the number and pride of its great men should increase proportionately. So it will be instructive to us, the panegyrists of greatness, to set down a small portion of the description of the hero's character, supplied by the author, after "the day of consummation or apotheosis" which dismisses him from the scene of his achievements:—

"Jonathan Wild had every qualification necessary to form a great man. As his most powerful and predominant passion was ambition, so nature had, with consummate propriety, adapted all his faculties to the attaining those glorious ends to which this passion directed him. He was extremely ingenious in inventing designs, artful in contriving the means to accomplish his purposes, and resolute in executing them; for as the most exquisite cunning and most undaunted boldness qualified him for any undertaking, so was he not restrained by any of those weaknesses which disappoint the views of mean and vulgar souls, and which are comprehended in one general term of honesty, which is a corruption of HONESTY, a word derived from what the Greeks call an ass."

There follow the fifteen points of the hero's Pilgrim's Scrip, of which I can only give a few specimens: To shun poverty and distress, and to ally himself as close as possible to power and riches; that the heart was the proper seat of hatred, and the countenance of affection and friendship; that many men were undone by not going deep enough in roguery; to know no distinction of men from affection, but to sacrifice all with equal readiness to his interest; that a good name, like money, must be parted with, or at least greatly risked, in order to bring the owner any advantage; that all men were knaves or fools, and much the greater number a composition of both; that virtues, like precious stones, were easily counterfeited; that the counterfeits in both cases adorned the wearer equally, and that very few had knowledge or discernment sufficient to distinguish the counterfeit jewel from the real.

* * *

HAVE we no consolation but the reflection that perhaps the meek shall inherit the stars? Are the noble youths who lie dead on our battlefields and sick in our prisons the only heirs of liberty? It is not so, for if our great men and the system that nourishes them see life steadily, they do not see it whole. They see life with one eye—a glistening eye—but the other eye is closed to those unseen realities which rescue life from the emptiness and vagueness peopled with the shapes of illusion. These real things, more real than the solid mountain because they can remove it, will not be denied; they will have their revenge possibly upon us, as well as the great men. The most awful vengeance that can befall the great man is, not to cease being a great man, but to find, like water, his own level, to become what he really is. The world may forgive him, heaven may forgive him, but the most grievous of his labors will be to forgive himself.

H. J. M.

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"A. E." is a writer in a curious position. About nine-tenths of those who admire him most passionately are a little uncertain whether he is humbugging them or not—whether, indeed, he is not humbugging himself. They are carried away by the large images of his poetry; they are moved by the twilight beauty of his landscapes; they respond to his eloquence as a seer of the co-operative commonwealth. But when it comes to the demi-gods, fairies, spirits, or whatever you care to call those plumed and fiery creatures of his vision, all but a few out-and-out disciples smile questioningly at one another. In their hearts they regard these things as the eccentricities of a great man rather than as inhabitants of earth, air, or eternity. They think of them as rather comic, like Blake's vision of the ghost of a flea which he once leaped out of bed to set down on paper. The truth is, in hearing of visions of this kind, most of us are like children hearing a stranger speak a language we do not know. We are amused, as at gibberish, never pausing to reflect that the sense may be in the stranger's speech and the lack of understanding in ourselves. And the more ignorant we are, the more disinclined are we to be seriously inquisitive beyond the tiny circle of our own world. In the proverbs, it is the ignorant man who believes in wonders. In reality, it is more often the ignorant man who laughs at wonders. We are by nature unbelievers in a great part of our being. We even regard our unbelief as a proof that we possess a sense of humor.

In a world in which death and distress are all about us, however, we need a faith as well as a sense of humor; and we cannot afford to dismiss in a flurry of prejudice the faith of any man who writes in good faith. We should be especially foolish to be impatient of the faith of a true poet who comes making us such bounteous offers as "A. E." "Sitting in your chair," he assures us, "you can travel farther than ever Columbus travelled, and to lordlier worlds than his eyes have rested on. Are you tired of surfaces? Come with me, and we will bathe in the Fountains of Youth. I can point you the way to El Dorado." This is a cheerful promise, a golden summons. What warrant have we that "A. E." is not asking us to chase a will-o'-the-wisp? What warrant have we that he has not been chasing a will-o'-the-wisp himself with the genius of an imaginative man? We can but listen attentively to his story and ponder it, ringing it on our sense of truth like a coin on a counter.

"A. E." tells us, at the outset, that his visionary life does not go back to his infancy. "I never," he declares, "felt a light in childhood which faded in manhood into the common light of day, nor do I believe that childhood is any nearer than age to the vision. . . . I was not conscious in my boyhood of any heaven lying about me." At the same time, we find, in the chapter called "Imagination," that while he was still in his 'teens he was in many respects the visionary that we know to-day. We see him walking along the country roads of Armagh at night with a dream-world in his head: "If I walked across my lawns in darkness, the grasses stirred by my feet would waken to vivid color and glimmer behind me with a trail of green fire." While he was still only seventeen or eighteen he was already trying to express this mystic dream-world in paint, and "began with much enthusiasm a series of pictures which were to illustrate the history of man from his birth in the Divine Mind, where he glimmered first in the darkness of chaos in vague and monstrous forms, growing ever nigher to the human, to men-beasts and men-birds, until at last the most perfect form, the Divine idea of man, was born in space." In connection with these boyish paintings, "A. E." relates an extraordinary experience. As he brooded over one of the pictures, wondering what legend to write beneath it, he began to feel "like one who is in a dark room and hears the breathing of another creature," and something whispered to him, "Call it 'The Birth of Æon.'" About a fortnight later, "A. E." was in the National Library in Dublin waiting for the attendant to

give him a book, when his eye fell on a volume that was lying open on a table. It was a dictionary of religion, and the first word that caught his eye was "Æon," and "it was explained as a word used by the Gnostics to designate the first created beings." Most people, as they read this, will murmur something about "coincidence," "coincidence" being in such matters a blessed word than "Mesopotamia" itself. "A. E." however, trembled at his discovery, and so great was the impression it made upon him that he has ever since called himself by the first two letters of the mysterious word, "Æon." He intended, we are told (though not in the present book) to take "Æon" as a pseudonym, but a printer, finding his handwriting not easy to decipher, printed only the first two letters, with a question-mark for the rest. "A. E." in his proof, deleted the question-mark, and left "A. E."—or rather, "Æ."—standing. Thus we see that even his mysterious initials are a sort of record of strange experiences belonging to the same world from which came the voices to Joan of Arc.

Nor did this experience stand alone. "A. E." gives us in his new book an account of a considerable number of visions, some of them prophetic, some of them explicable by thought-transference, which came to him in those early years. He began then to cultivate what may be called the habit of vision. For this, one is surprised to learn, he believes that no special genius is needed. "Genius!" he exclaims, "There is no stinting of this by the keeper of the Treasure House. It is not bestowed, but it is won. Yon man of heavy soul might if he willed play upon the lyre of Apollo, that drunkard be god-intoxicated." He does not pretend, however, that the power of evocation, the mastery of one's vision, comes without labor. He tells us how he himself set to work to attain mastery over the will. "I would choose some mental object, an abstraction of form, and strive to hold my mind fixed on it in unwearied concentration, so that not for a moment, not for an instant, would the concentration slacken. It is an exercise this, a training for higher adventures of the soul: it is no light labor. The ploughman's cleaving the furrows is easier by far. Five minutes of this effort will at first leave us trembling as at the close of a laborious day." "A. E.'s" theory is that the body fights its hardest to suppress the spirit's attempt to become free. "Empires do not send legions so quickly to frustrate revolt as all that is mortal in us hurries along nerve, artery, and every highway of the body to beset the soul." At first, he tells us, his vision sometimes made him vain; he was like a person who at the rising of the sun would say: "This glory is mine." But he always paid the penalty for such vain self-deceptions. "By the sudden uprising of such vanities in the midst of vision I was often outcast." He maintains, indeed, that those who make use of the higher powers of vision for selfish ends are in grave peril. "Woe to him who awakens it before he has purified his being of selfishness, for it will turn downwards and vitalize his darker passions and awaken strange frenzies and inextinguishable desires. The turning earthward of that heaven-born power is the sin against the Holy Breath, for that fire which leaps upon us with the ecstasy of contemplation of Deity is the Holy Breath, the power which can carry us from earth to heaven."

"A. E.'s" theology is not always easy to make out in his new book. At times he seems to be a polytheist, but he would probably deny that he was more of a polytheist than a believer in the Trinity. Like Mr. Wells, indeed, he seems to believe in the Trinity with a difference, and to associate the God man may know especially with this earth man does know. The object of his book, he says, is to "bring back thought to that Being whom the ancient seers worshipped as Deity. I believe," he adds, "that most of what was said of God was in reality said of that spirit whose body is earth." At the same time, it is not in the visible earth that "A. E." finds the vision of reality. He believes with Plato that "the earth is not all what the geographers suppose it to be." We live in a world of shadows or reflections. Another world permeates and surrounds our own, populous with immortal presences. "A. E." believes that in ecstasy, vision, and dreams we actually see these presences. He believes that imagination is but a means of recovering our lost citizenship and consciousness of that starry world. "I am convinced that all poetry is, as Emerson said, first written in the heavens." Did not Blake also claim that the authors of his poems were in eternity and that his books were the delight of archangels?

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"My first experience there was far from encouraging. The day after I took over from my predecessor I ventured into the men's recreation room. I was received with silence, frosty and most discouraging. I made a few remarks about the weather. I commented on the stagnant condition of the war at the moment. The things I said were banal and foolish no doubt, yet I meant well, and scarcely deserved the reply which came at last. A man who was playing billiards dropped the butt of his cue on the ground with a bang, surveyed me with hostile stare, and said: 'We don't want no — parsons here.'"

Being a man of spirit and humor, Mr. Birmingham soon found that there were other ways beside the proffer of super-

fluous spiritual munitions in which he could serve the Army. As expert at chess, cribbage, draughts, billiards, and bridge, as organizer of concert parties and magic lantern lectures, Mr. Birmingham befriended and kept out of mischief the large army of boys who had enlisted too young to be of any use for fighting. The existence of these boys was one of the real problems of the Base. As Mr. Birmingham says, "it is not your 'good' boy who rushes to the recruiting office to tell a lie about his age." The existence in camp of this army of young hooligans was a standing menace to discipline; and the social and moral difficulty was even worse. At last an Irish surgeon decided that something must be done. Although "trying to get anything of an exceptional kind done in the Army is like floundering in a trench full of sticky mud, surrounded by dense entanglements of barbed red tape," with the help of the Y.M.C.A., a popular colonel, an enthusiastic lady worker, and the Irish genius for defying system, the Young Soldiers' Camp was started at last. Its first meeting was "a riot, in which every window in the place and everything else breakable was shattered into bits"; but after that, all went well.

The time for good advice is now happily drawing to a close, but when ex-President Roosevelt and the "Morning Post" have had their way and we are once more engaged in a world war, Mr. Birmingham will have a word to say to the War Office about the evils of life at the Base. One of the chief causes of its demoralizing effects on the soldier is its hideous dullness; a second, and a less obvious factor, is the starvation of the aesthetic faculties.

"For a long time after settling down in that camp I was vaguely uneasy without being able to discover what was the matter with me. I was thoroughly healthy. I was well fed. I was associating with kindly and agreeable men. I had plenty of interesting work to do. Yet I was conscious of something wrong. It was not home-sickness, a feeling I know well and can recognise. It was not fear. I was as safe as if I had been in England."

Mr. Birmingham discovered, by accident, that he was suffering from an unsatisfied yearning for color. Everything at the Base is the color of mud; the huts, the tents, the men, the W.A.A.C.s, even the lady canteen workers, who, had they truly understood the Army's needs, would have decked themselves in scarlet, green, and gold. For "men want color, just as they want liquid and warmth. They are not at their best without it." The widespread enthusiasm for gardening, at which the men put in an amount of voluntary work that they would greatly have resented for other purposes, the pleasure they took in the arrangement of brightly colored stones outside the orderly rooms, was an unconscious protest against the world of drab. It is possible too that this ugly monotony is not really the surest means of defence. "In the next war, if there be a next war, regiments will perhaps move against the enemy as gay as kingfishers and quite as difficult to see, whilst fighting men will look to each other like ladies in the beauty chorus of a revue."

"*A Padre in France*" is a genial and well written account of the secular life at the Base. The author's experiences were neither particularly exciting nor particularly comfortable, but they contained some memorable moments. One of these was the playing out of a hand at bridge during a Zeppelin raid; the other was a staff officers' lunch, which moved Mr. Birmingham's companion to exclaim: "If this is war, the sooner it comes to England the better."

Such religious and amatory emotions as are excluded from Mr. Birmingham's book are lavishly restored to us by Miss Leake. When the V.A.D. is not chatting about transubstantiation with a patient or holding the House Surgeon's hand, the sad story of the injured colonel sweeps away her pen. Thus:

"Oh how can I explain it? The vision of a knight betrayed and broken, beaten and battered, who rises again with lance set and courage undaunted. Bravely triumphant for the sake of two little girls who believe in their mother's fairness—the mother whom their adored father chose for them. Yet the vein of humor; hiding the hurt heart; the kindness of it all. How typical a British gentleman the man is."

The V.A.D., it is only fair to remember, has a great deal to put up with—discipline, garbage, the conversation of her fellow nurses. Squeamishness, either about life or English prose composition, is not an asset at a war hospital. Fortu-

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nately for her own and for her patients' chances of survival, "Red Cross Nurse's" nerves are tough. She adores Kipling, and does not faint at operations; she can endure without complaint the insolence of orderlies and the snubs of sisters, and she can laugh at the Anzac's jokes. And so we can respect her heroism, even when she expresses it.

MARSHAL FOCH.

"Marshal Foch: His Life, his Work, his Faith." By RENÉ PUAUX. Translated by E. ALLEN. (Hodder & Stoughton. 5s. net.)

EVEN if Marshal Foch had never come to the supreme command on the Western Front, he would have had an enduring place in military history. It is not generally known yet how greatly he deserved it; but in a careful study of the war the eye seems ever to be drawn to a focus in this same stern, confident figure. The defeat at Morhange, in the first days of the war, was only prevented from becoming a rout by the efficient cover of Foch's 20th Corps, and he remained in command until the attempt to pierce the Gap of Charmes had failed, and with it half of the German plan. Called to direct the Ninth Army, he waited patiently till his units, drawn from every part of the battlefield, were assembled, and then turned them into an army and pierced the German line when his own right was streaming back in disorder. He saw the Northern group of armies through the terrible days on the Yser and at Ypres, meeting every call upon him with superb nonchalance, ever versatile, hopeful, unyielding. It was under his direction that trench warfare found its appropriate tactics at Carentan and Notre Dame de Lorette. The Somme was fought under his eye, and later he became Chief-of-Staff, assisted at the re-establishment of Italy last autumn, and in the darkest days of March became Commander-in-Chief. It was a natural and inevitable decision, since he alone remained master of himself and of the position when everything seemed lost. And, become Commander-in-Chief, he had to deal with one crisis after another. No sooner was Amiens saved than the Lys was rushed and the Germans seemed destined to reach the coast. When this attempt was foiled there was the sudden advance to the Marne to stem, and at length the time came to make an end. The Germans struck on each side of Reims, and the memorable counter-attack was delivered. Ample justice has been done to Gouraud's defence east of Reims, but the blow at Soissons cannot yet be visualized in all its bearings. It bore a striking resemblance to the desperate stroke which turned the tide of the Marne, and few know how deeply Foch mortgaged his reserves to press it to success. In this, as in other expedients during the war, he showed himself a soldier of whom Napoleon would have approved. If Ludendorff had been a great general, disaster might have fallen upon the Allies. But Foch had studied his opponent too well, and Ludendorff, with the power to recover the initiative, never again had the chance. The succeeding strokes up to the main offensive were a masterly series of preparations, and when the last four days of September suddenly put the whole German defensive in jeopardy, Ludendorff informed the German Chancellor that he must ask for an immediate armistice.

But Foch stands above his own work. Long before the war his lectures had become an inspiration to the student. He ever insisted on his students learning to think and will. "War," he said, "is the sphere of moral force; battle, the struggle between two wills; victory, the moral superiority of the conqueror, the moral depression of the conquered." What room in such a prescription for rote, for the scientific aspect of war? Commanders were to command and inspire—Will was the determinant of victory. It is not that Foch ignored the scientific aspect of war. He assumed it. His lectures are full of profound knowledge. He is a consummate tactician, a versatile and masterly strategist. But in the end, battles are won by fighting, and it is will that prevails.

Marshal Foch has proved his theses in the stern school of war. He does not yet look his sixty-seven years, though sorrow has aged him during the war. A Southerner by birth, he is

apt to become animated when he converses on his favorite subject. But his mind is wonderfully balanced, and his will indomitable. The war has cast up few really great figures; but Foch is one of them. Simple, direct, kindly, and deeply religious, he knows how to command, as how to obey. It is reported that when French informed Foch, in the Battle of Ypres, that he intended to retire, Foch dissuaded him. "Then we can only die," French retorted. "Stand firm first; we can die afterwards," Foch replied. Whether true or not the sentiment is characteristic, and one could wish that so great a man had found a better biographer than M. Puaux, who seems to have only admiration as a qualification.

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We are apt to deliver rather hasty judgments about artistic tradition, and on that account to dismiss it as encumbering the free development of the human spirit manifested in the arts. Connecting tradition quite arbitrarily with the rules, with pedantry, with the image rather than the reality of knowledge, our impatient generation is apt to forget that there is no necessary association between tradition and restriction. For the fact is that in the arts tradition is the only criterion of survival. A certain amount of fine literature is handed down from an age to posterity not because it is tenacious like old, but because it is fresh and alive like youth.

So that when we say that Mr. Davies's poems have a traditional tone and stamp, we mean it as a compliment. So much has been written about his poems and so extraordinarily stable and uniform is their quality, so obvious their appeal, and so clear and precise their workmanship, that there is no more to be said about him than an almond tree in blossom. His poetry exists, and though we do not find in it a wide range of intellectual power, a profound exploration of life's mysteries, or an intense spiritual clairvoyance, neither do we find humor in Blake, wit in Wordsworth, nor gaiety in Emily Brontë. We may, indeed, say various things about him—his melody, felicity of phrase, his dewy sweetness and spontaneity and all the rest of it, repeated until, in truth, we are sick of the words. It is a bore to write it all down; Mr. Davies writes to be read, not written about, and at last we come down to this—that, so far as the present writer is concerned, he enjoyed the last poem of the author's he read as much as the first; that this enjoyment has never grown weary, in spite of the fact that Mr. Davies's Muse has not an extensive wardrobe, and that when he does get sick of him he will be sick of the sight of green fields, the smell of violets and the sound of singing birds. More than half of Mr. Davies's songs are perfect in themselves, without a flaw and of a beauty which we do not the less cherish because it is easy to be understood and of a character common to all the children of Nature and, let us hope, in spite of plenty of evidence to the contrary, of the most part of mankind. Such, we feel, is neither grudging nor excessive praise. This is his epitaph on Edward Thomas:—

"Happy the man whose home is still
In Nature's green and peaceful ways;
To wake and hear the birds so loud,
That scream for joy to see the sun
Is shouldering past a sullen cloud."

And we have known those days, when we
Would wait to hear the cuckoo first;
When you and I with thoughtful mind
Would help a bird to hide her nest,
For fear of other hands less kind.

But thou, my friend, art lying dead:
War with its hell-born childlessness
Has claimed thy life, with many more;
The man that loved this England well,
And never left it once before."

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And they have made me see those fatal charms
Of Helen which brought Troy so many harms;
And lovely Venus, when she stood so white
Close to her husband's forge in its red light.
I have seen Dian's beauty in my dreams,
When she had trained her looks in all the streams
She crossed to Patmos and Endymion,
And Cleopatra's eyes, that hour they shone
The brighter for a pearl she drank to prove
How poor it was compared to her rich love;
But when I look on thee, love, thou dost give
Substance to those fine ghosts and make them live."

We hardly feel that Mr. Davies need feel ashamed that he has not written more war-poems.

"Pearl," as the student of literature knows, is one of a group of alliterative poems written anonymously in the fourteenth century, a group which includes Piers Plowman, "Joseph of Arimathea," and "Sir Gawain and the Green Knight." We wish that the ordinary reader knew what an exquisite and incomparable thing it is, "begemmed," though Mr. Gosse calls it. For that reason we agree with the translator, Dr. Kirtlan, that "it is a bold thing to challenge so great a master." It is not only bold, we submit with all deference to the translator, but superfluous, and that, too, in spite of the fact that, so far as it goes, so far as it can go, the rendering is spirited, readable, and idiomatic. But we repeat, why translate this noble poem at all; why not read it as its unknown author wrote it? "Pearl" was written not only when the language had definitely passed from the inflected and synthetic to the uninflated and analytic, but when the vernacular was at its most virile, productive and abundant. If we moderns can read Chaucer and Piers Plowman in the original fourteenth-century native English, if furthermore we can read the metrical chronicles, the songs of Laurence Minot, and even the "Acrene Riwle" of a still earlier date, without recourse to the services of a translator, we surely can manage "Pearl." It is written in "Middle English," from which the stage to modern English is more a matter of spelling and syllabic pronunciation than radical form. At any rate, with glossarial footnotes most of the difficulties are too slight to admit of such a sacrifice of the spirit of the original which a modern version, however good and faithful, must entail. A literal word-for-word transcript is really the only legitimate course for the interpreter, and that, to our mind, is quite unnecessary. Dr. Kirtlan writes us a learned and instructive Introduction, but to say that these alliterative poems were "the expression of a great national and democratic movement in England consequent upon the successful wars of Edward III. against France," is as though we were to declare that the democratic movement in Germany is consequent upon the war she has just conducted against England. It is so, but the chain of causation is a little deceptive.

Some of Mr. Binyon's poems collected in this book may be called good newspaper verse. The others are more impressive, and we can acclaim the author's good feeling, sincerity, and conscientious workmanship. The best poem in the book is "Hunger," which conveys a solemnity and terror that will make it remembered when the ephemeral verse of many and many a minor poet has vanished:—

"I come among the peoples like a shadow.
I sit down by each man's side.
None sees me, but they look on one another,
And know that I am there.
My silence is like the silence of the tide;
That buries the playground of children;
Like the deepening frost in the slow night,
When birds are dead in the morning.
Armies trample, invade, destroy,
With guns roaring from earth and air.
I am more terrible than armies.
I am more feared than the cannon.
Kings and chancellors give commands;
I give no command to any;
But I am listened to more than kings
And more than passionate orators.
I unsheathe words, and undo deeds.
Naked things know me.
I am first and last to be felt of the living,
I am Hunger."

CHRISTMAS GIFTS.

THERE were never fewer books of the kind which are meant for gift books than have been published this December. This is not meant as a complaint, but as an unfeeling statement. No reviewer could object to the limited output, if it is a labor-saving device. On the other hand, the output does not seem to have been limited by the rigorous selection of only those works which deserve to live. But here one had better be careful; for what are the best books for children has not yet been settled, because it will never be. Only Metropolitan stipendiaries, and those who make a solemn study of children's welfare without taking their own childhood into consultation, ever suppose that "bad" books have a "pernicious" influence on youth. As so few of us can tell a good book from a book which ought to die, and yet we read the latter without doing any more harm than wasting time that we should have wasted in any case, we need not worry when we see a boy with "Three-fingered Jack, the Terror of the Antilles." While looking very grave, as is expected of us, over the popularity with all schoolboys of Alkali Pete at the cinema, we remember that it would have been the same with us at their age. We absorbed enough pernicious print in youth, by the reckoning of any magistrate, to have turned us into profiteers discovered by unexpected Peace counting evil fortunes we had made out of sorrow and disaster; but alas! Three-fingered Jack and Morgan the Pirate failed us in an obvious opportunity. We do not blame ourselves. We remember that Tolstoy read bawdy novels in his youth, and the Tsar in his, like all monarchs, books of devotion. You never can tell. The only certain thing about a child reader is that it is, naturally, insensitive to the music of great language, and indifferent to the noble appeal, and it is almost as certain that it will be just as insensitive and indifferent when adult.

That does not mean, of course, that anything will do as reading for the children. Without being able to explain their preferences, these are found out, with a little careful watching. There is, for example, an enthusiasm among the very young for works by the author of "Benjamin Bunny" which is widely spread, and, if one has the patience to look into it, offers an excellent example to most of us elders. For Beatrix Potter, the author and illustrator of these little books (her contribution this year is "The Tale of Johnny Town-Mouse," Warne, 2s. net), has an innocent humor, both in her drawings and in her legends, which is original and irresistible. Of this order of books, for children of the same age, "Billy's Garden Plot" (Blackie, 4s. net), as vivaciously related and illustrated by S. Rosamond Prager, deserves applause for its good fun. If all books for adults were done as well we should be lucky. "A Little Chaff," by Margaret Lavington and Helen Urquhart (Lane 3s. 6d. net), some country rhymes for children of the city, is another happy little effort. These three cheerful books ought not to be overlooked. "Big Peter's Little Peter," written and illustrated by Lilian Cheesman (Jarrold, 7s. 6d. net), is the right thing for various ages. It is one of those books for children which parents also usually read through, for the author's enjoyment in her work is communicative.

There are very few new illustrated fairy books of the more elaborate kind, but three should have honorable mention. "Beasts and Men," folk-tales collected in Flanders and illustrated by Jean de Bosschère (Heinemann, 12s. 6d. net), is what the author gives us this year as a welcome companion to his "Christmas Tales of Flanders." The artist's decorations in color are too involved, rich, and delicate to do more than confuse the mind of a child who expects an illustration to a story and is confronted with a chromatic mystery; but the simple lines of his black-and-white are droll and cunning enough to set the youngest mind out into the adventure of the stories—and the stories are delightful. "English Fairy Tales," by Flora Annie Steel and illustrated by Arthur Rackham (Macmillan, 10s. 6d. net), are the old fables re-told. The stories run in colloquial English. No child could listen to Mrs. Steel's easy confidence in the world of magic without at once losing itself in that world. As to Mr. Rackham's illustrations, they accord with the warm and comfortable English versions of the Northern folk-tales. His ogres and witches are merely delightfully comic,

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however huge and grotesque; and his fairies and children are of May orchards. He communicates no shiver from an uncanny other world, like de Bosschère. "Canadian Folk Tales," by Cyrus Macmillan, with illustrations in color by George Sheringham (Lane, 15s. net), is a novel and enticing volume. The author has wandered among the Indian tribes of Canada, and has taken down the stories of magic and transformation he has heard by camp fires. Yet no child who has read "Hiawatha" will need an introduction to these yarns; and the colored decorations to the book, though not altogether in keeping with it, are attractive in their own way. Of the original fairy stories, "In Whealabout and Cockalone," by Grace Rhys, illustrated by Megan Rhys and Margaret Tarrant (Harrap, 5s. net), should be mentioned for its amusing fancy and the brightness of its dialogue; and "Fairy Tales from Foreign Lands," by Druid Grayl (Blackwell, 3s. 6d. net), is a good medley of fairies, princes, and strange beasts.

"The Springtide of Life," poems of childhood by A. C. Swinburne, with a preface by Edmund Gosse and illustrations by Arthur Rackham (Heinemann, 10s. 6d. net), is an interesting volume of verse, for there may be students who will be curious to know what Swinburne thought about childhood. Here it mostly is. As this is a rapid guide to books that would do for Christmas gifts, and cannot be a criticism of Swinburne's poetical appreciation of infants, one stanza may serve:—

" Seven white roses on one tree,
Seven white loaves of blameless leaven,
Seven white sails on one soft sea,
Seven white swans on one lake's lee,
Seven white flowerlike stars in heaven,
All are type unmeet to be
For a birthday's crown of seven."

"Wild Life of the World," by Richard Lydekker, F.R.S., in three volumes (Warne, 4 guineas), is the sort of royal gift which would, had the luck of it come our way when young, have filled us with wonder and gratitude not far short of speechless awe. The study of nature, as a new school of educationists is teaching it, has aroused an enthusiasm in the young which is embarrassing to many parents who don't know a Purple Emperor from a Tapir, don't know where either lives, don't know how to find out, and have got no work of reference they can rely upon. A good and fairly full work of reference upon animal life is essential in any home where there are children; and this work by Mr. Lydekker is sufficiently full, and is thoroughly reliable. The author does not, as usual, work through the natural Orders from the anthropoids to the polyps—a method which always, in the end, left an uncertainty as to whether elephants were to be found in Brazil. He describes the Orders as he comes to them in geographical distribution; an excellent plan, which makes evident, for example, the difference between the American tropical forest and the Congo jungle. It would be difficult to overpraise the generous illustrations in these volumes. A few of them incline to the romantic, but usually they are faithful studies of their subjects, and many of them, as when the koodoo is represented, are very beautiful.

As to the new stories for boys and girls, Captain Gilson gives a robust mystery story of Central Africa, "In the Power of the Pygmies" (Milford, 5s. net); Herbert Strang has another African yarn, "Tom Willoughby's Scouts" (Milford, 5s. net); and Clarence Case, a story of the Saxon invasion, "The Banner of the White Horse" (Harrap, 5s. net). "A Little Ship," by "Taffrail" (Chambers, 6s. net), is not fiction, nor is it specifically a book for boys; but boys are realists to-day, and "Taffrail's" book of the real adventures of a naval officer on war service can be specially commended for its good writing, its humor, its freshness and simplicity, and its complete freedom from the cant many writers assume as a purple garment when they are narrating of ships and the sea in wartime. "Submarine and Anti-submarine," by Henry Newbolt (Longman's, 7s. 6d. net), is a very interesting account of the work of the latest arm of the senior Service, and of the perils of submarine-chasers.

A selection of the more likely from the new list of books for girls: "Lodgings to Let," by Violet Bradby, illustrated by George Morrow (Milford, 3s. 6d. net); "Spoilt Cynthia at School," by May Baldwin (Chambers);

"The School of Ups and Downs," by Elsie Oxenham (Chambers); and "A Patriotic School Girl," by Angela Brazil (Blackie, 4s. 6d. net).

There are three other books we wish to mention. They are not for children. But if anyone is looking for "the real thing" for an understanding friend who is no child in these matters, then try de Coster's "The Legend of Tyl Ulenspiegel" (Chatto & Windus, 7s. 6d. net). It has been translated from the French by Geoffrey Whitworth, and has twenty woodcuts by Albert Delstanche. This famous Belgian work, Rabelaisian in its character, is unfortunately expurgated to some extent, but it is still, even in this English edition, on the large scale, the obvious work of a master, a man who knew sorrow, but who loved to share the mirth and good living of his fellows, mocked impostors wherever he found them, and had a hatred of cruelty and injustice that is like lightning. It is one of the rare books, full of sad laughter and warm understanding, of the order of Don Quixote. Another book is one we do not remember seeing mentioned anywhere. For that reason, though it was published last year, it must get a notice here. "By the Wayside" is a book of tales and legends illustrated and translated by Una Hook from the Danish of Viggo Stuckenberg (Chatto & Windus). Stuckenberg was an artist who died in 1905, and he was unknown except to a young generation of Danish authors who respected him as a writer and critic. Their respect, judging by this translation, was thoroughly justified. These stories look like fairy tales; and their landscapes are so wide, and with such an atmosphere of freedom and expectancy, that the sly satire of the stories comes rather as a shock when the reader discovers where he really is. A thoroughly enjoyable volume. And still another book is "The Happy Hypocrite" (Lane, 21s. net), illustrated by George Sheringham for an edition to do some honor to its author. As Max Beerbohm is so shy, publishers are compelled to do this with him, to bring him out; and as there is no need to tip a wink to the knowing over Lord George Hell, this notice will be sufficient intimation to them.

The Week in the City.

OWING largely to the failure of the Government to demobilize—according to the Northcliffe Press less than 10,000 soldiers have received even a conditional discharge—the financial situation gets worse rather than better, and the continuance of military operations in Russia is another bear point of the Stock Exchange. The great cotton strike in Lancashire, and the electioneering concessions to railwaymen, confirm the fears and anxieties of those who believe that industrial conflicts at home are unavoidable now that the strain of war is over. Mr. Churchill's promise to take over the railways gave some stimulus to that market, but the buying soon came to an end. Under these adverse circumstances, the continued dullness of Consols and gilt-edged securities is hardly surprising. On Thursday afternoon Consols were quoted at 50*1/2*, and French Fives were 85*1/2*. Russian issues have been depressed and prices are nominal. Mexican securities are also dull, and even Argentine Railways get little support. Money has been plentiful at from 2*1/2* to 3*1/2* per cent. Discount rates remain at about 3*1/2* per cent. for all maturities.

THE P. & O. REPORT.

It is difficult for shareholders to gather from the latest report of the P. & O. any very precise information as to the Company's earnings in the twelve months ended September 30th last, or indeed, as to its financial position. The profit and loss account does not state profit, but only gives a figure for "net result after providing for depreciation, &c., and adding £50,000 each to the contingent and provident food service funds"—and depreciation is not specified. This "net result" is £782,360, which compares with £762,456 in the previous year, and £494,160 in the first year of war; so, whatever the nature of the depreciation allowance, the company would seem to have had a pretty good year. Debenture interest absorbs slightly less at £55,844, the Preference divided the same sum of £152,000, and the Ordinary divided at last year's rate of 18 per cent. (paid free of tax), takes £575,701, leaving the carry forward £1,000 lower than a year ago. The balance sheet unfortunately contains only one item on the assets side, property, fleet, stores, investments, cash, &c., all being lumped together and totalling some £16*1/2* millions. This total exceeds the total assets of a year ago by £3*1/2* millions.

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